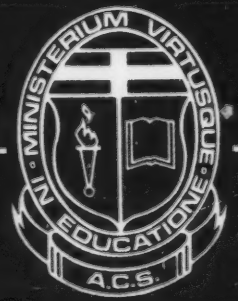
THE MAKING OF OPPORTUNITY



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THE MAKING OF OPPORTUNITY

A man must make his opportunity, as oft as find it.

- Francis Bacon
1561 - 1626

A history of the Alberta Correspondence School, 1923 - 1983,
prepared to commemorate its 60th anniversary.

Since its inception this School has been assisting students
in many different situations to make their own opportunities.

"...Most of these people do not realize just how large is our enrollment nor how scattered are the pupils...."

Marguerite Meiklejohn
December, 1958

First Edition
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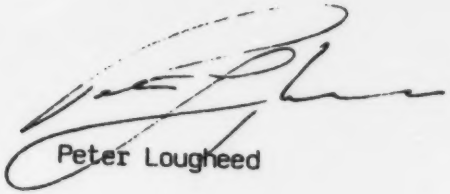
MESSAGE FROM PREMIER LOUGHEED

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, I wish to take this opportunity to recognize the important contribution of the Alberta Correspondence School to Alberta's educational system over the last 60 years.

We, as a province, have experienced tremendous change over the last century. Sixty years ago, Alberta was sparsely populated and children would often have to travel long distances resulting in hardship. Therefore, the Alberta Correspondence School was created to ensure equal access to educational services through correspondence education. For Albertans with less accessibility or mobility, and for persons upgrading their education, the Alberta Correspondence School has assisted in the educational growth of thousands of Albertans. The alumni owe a substantial debt of gratitude to the staff who have made such an outstanding and meaningful contribution to the people of this Province.

With improved facilities at the new location in Barrhead, the Alberta Correspondence School will continue its record of excellence in providing quality educational services.



Peter Lougheed

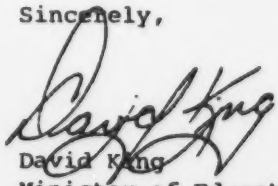
On behalf of the Government of Alberta, I want to congratulate the Alberta Correspondence School and its staff on the occasion of its 60th Anniversary.

In my view, education is the most important activity in the community. The Alberta Correspondence School continues to provide Albertans with an opportunity to obtain a quality education, and hence to improve their position of life. The fact that every year, many thousands of Albertans enrol in the school is testimony to its ability to provide this essential service.

This informative book includes some major events in the school's year of service. I hope that your friends will read and enjoy it.

Best wishes to the school and its staff.

Sincerely,



David King
Minister of Education

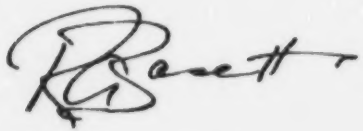
The 60th anniversary of the Alberta Correspondence School provides a fitting opportunity for a tribute to all those associated with the School.

I wish to congratulate the teachers, the administration and members of the support staff for their continuing efforts to provide services to students who might otherwise not have had the opportunity to complete their education.

I also wish to recognize the encouragement of parents and the persistence of the students involved in achieving their educational goals.

The Alberta Correspondence School faces a new period of challenges and rewards. Developments in communications technology have the potential to revolutionize the communication process between teacher and student. Through new aspects of distance education, the Alberta Correspondence School can provide a more productive and rewarding experience for an increasing number of students.

My best wishes for continued success.

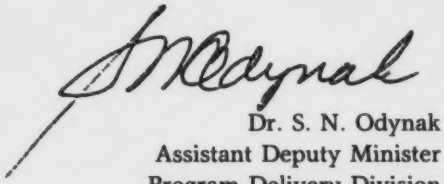


Reno A. Bosetti
Deputy Minister

The Alberta Correspondence School is to be commended for its services to thousands of students in this Province and elsewhere, enabling them to get an education where circumstances were such as to preclude their attending a regular school or their school programs needed supplementing.

Certainly, over the past sixty years, the Alberta Correspondence School has played a major role in the educational system by literally being a "last chance" institution.

In this electronic age, I know that the staff is looking forward to an even greater role. I wish the School and its staff well in its new facilities in Barrhead. Distance education has a great future and I have every confidence that the Alberta Correspondence School will be a major contributor to that future.



Dr. S. N. Odynak
Assistant Deputy Minister
Program Delivery Division
Alberta Education

Over the past sixty years, the Alberta Correspondence School has developed into a major educational institution in Alberta. The success of the School is really quite remarkable as it has been won in the face of much adversity. Why the School has grown and expanded when it has never been richly endowed is not readily evident until one examines the research into excellence in management. Many of the good management practices which Thomas J. Peters observed in well-run corporations have been standard practices at the Alberta Correspondence School.

The School has worked hard to keep things simple and to do the job which has to be done as quickly and effortlessly as possible. There has always been a great concern for meeting student needs. A strong emphasis has been placed on maintaining close contact with the student and on establishing good rapport between the teacher and student. It is the student who drives the organization.

Since the essential focus has been on the School's mission, the staff has generally developed a sense of commitment to the organization. The senior administrators, with their long employment histories with the Alberta Correspondence School, have possessed a thorough understanding of the organization and its function as an integral part of the education system in Alberta. From the very beginning the Alberta Correspondence School has been aware of its particular niche in serving Alberta students and its resources and energies have, for the last sixty years, been directed to doing what it does best — serving students with unique learning needs.

A. J. Turnbull

Amelia Joy Turnbull
Director

INTRODUCTION

By the 1920's the concept of correspondence education was not new. Correspondence schools had been established in several Australian states prior to 1923 and British Columbia had led the way for Canada by establishing one in 1919. Probably Perren Baker had heard of the British Columbia initiative, and of the Calvert School of Baltimore, Maryland, which began in 1905 and advertised in a number of well-known magazines. He saw that a similar mode of delivery of elementary education was introduced in Alberta.

Although it is not possible, in a book of this size, to do justice to all aspects of the work of educating by correspondence in Alberta, it is hoped that enough has been included to give the general public some appreciation of what has been attempted in the difficult task of providing correspondence education to students in Alberta.

PART I

The Education-by-Mail Experiment

A Need Recognized

In early 1924 the Deputy Minister of Education for Alberta, J.T. Ross, sat down to prepare the traditional annual report for the previous year. There were many achievements to mention and several trends to note. Generally speaking 1923 had been a good year for Alberta. A remarkably heavy wheat crop had been harvested, and this, although important to the Province as a whole, had a special importance for the Department of Education. A good crop should mean that current municipal taxes would be paid and back taxes collected. Many school boards were finding their finances in the healthiest state since the hard winter of 1919-1920, and some had announced their intention of operating their schools throughout the entire school year instead of closing for several months, as had been done too often in the past. This gave reason for some satisfaction. As a result the provincial government could give grants to the school districts in areas not so favoured by Mother Nature.

Ross glanced at a map of Alberta which showed the areas which were organized for educational purposes. There were still too many settled areas which were not organized. Some were astonishingly close to Edmonton. The problem of what to do about education for the children in those areas had given the Department cause for concern, and the Minister of Education, the Hon. Perren Baker, had insisted that the senior officials of the Department make tours of those areas with a view to doing something about it. Ross remarked,

> a large number of families in Alberta have located on the outskirts of settlements, and are too remote from their neighbours to make it possible for them to form a school district ... To obviate the necessity of these settlers moving from their homesteads, a method was devised whereby a correspondence course has been provided for them. Each family is supplied with Readers and instructions as to how to conduct the work of educating the children. The exercises of the pupils are being forwarded to the Department of Education, where they are corrected and returned with helpful suggestions to the parents. Isolated families are appreciating this privilege, and more than one hundred families had applied for the course within two months of its inauguration.

The Bold Experiment

While Ross was preparing his report for 1923, Supervisor of Schools, G. Fred McNally, was outlining the work of his section of the Department. An unfortunate event was the closing of the Edmonton Normal School which resulted in a loss of good people because of problems of financing. More optimistically McNally reported that two hundred sixty-nine people had attended the summer school for teachers.

Almost as an afterthought McNally turned his attention to an experiment which the Minister had insisted on trying in 1923, his experiment in education-by-mail:

> At the opening of the fall term, at your suggestion, a survey was made to ascertain if there were any considerable number of children living in isolated neighborhoods, and so without school facilities. It was thought that in the case of younger children sufficient direction might be given the mother to enable her to teach the beginners in reading, writing and numbers. In a short time it became apparent that there were many such children, and that such a service as that suggested would be very welcome. Application forms were drafted, instructions prepared, and lessons outlined. By the end of the year nearly one hundred children had been enrolled for the lesson outlines. Many of the pupils are very keen for the work, and return their written exercises very promptly. If one may judge from the enthusiasm of the students, the opportunity thus given is very much appreciated.

In these two paragraphs, printed in two different parts of the *Annual Report* for 1923, Ross and McNally had given a brief outline of the Department's experiment in correspondence education. The experimental nature of the project continued to influence the thinking of departmental officials for a number of years. There were fears that school boards might shirk their responsibilities and seek the easy solution of having their district schools closed and their pupils educated by correspondence. The scope of the work was broadened only reluctantly to include pupils from such districts where the school did not operate for the full school year. Nevertheless, each annual report showed an increase in enrollment. When Supervisor of Schools, G. Fred McNally, reported for 1926, the total number of students registered since the beginning of the experiment was over nine hundred. Nearly a quarter of these were in Grade One and only twenty were in Grade Eight. It had already been noticed that correspondence pupils had done well on departmental examinations.

In 1927 two hundred fifty-five new pupils were added, and for the first time the words *Correspondence Branch* were used in an annual report. Approximately one third of the pupils enrolled continued to work from year to year.

In his 1928 report, McNally wrote of the Correspondence Course Branch, and of an increase in enrollment of over three hundred pupils. By now its work was generally recognized as part of the educational life of this Province.

The Founder

It was not until the *Annual Report* for 1929 that Mrs. Sievwright, the teacher who assumed the responsibility for correspondence education in Alberta, was mentioned as a teacher of experience, who had been unusually successful in holding the interest of the pupils once they had sent in answer papers. For the first time, too, an annual report acknowledged individual success:

> Miss May Johnston, who was awarded the I.O.D.E. Scholarship at the University of Alberta last fall, completed her Grades VII and VIII with the aid of the Correspondence Branch.

This report gave other details, too:

> Pupils are taking extramural work at Fort Vermilion, Carcajou Point, Notikewin, Rolla, Peace River, Spirit River, Atikene Lake, north of Lesser Slave Lake, north of Cold Lake, Faust and Lac La Biche; as far west as there is settlement along the main line of the Canadian National Railways, and south to the boundary.

From 1923 to 1930 Mrs. Sievwright, working at a desk in the Department of Education wing of the Legislative Building, was the entire Correspondence School.

Her struggle to establish correspondence education in Alberta is outlined in the following article.

Mrs. Sievwright

> In Alberta's Department of Education, the Correspondence Course Branch is now on the main line. It costs more than half a million dollars a year to operate. It has a staff of 100. It mails out correspondence courses to 8,000 high school students and 2,000 in the junior grade. It's a booming concern. But it was not always that way when it started 37 years ago, it had no money to operate on, it had ten students all in the lowest grades, and it had a staff of one. The staff of the original correspondence school is still with us. She's living in the Good Samaritan Home on the south side and Mrs. Elizabeth Sievwright is as interested as ever in the new techniques in education-by-postman.

Mrs. Sievwright is Scottish — Highland Scottish — and has the inherent Caledonian aversion to "tooting one's own horn." As a result, it has been necessary for other people to toot it for her. And while it is quite true, as Mrs. Sievwright says, that it was not her idea to start the correspondence courses, she was the one chosen to do it.

It was the idea of the Honourable Perren Baker, Minister of Education in the old Farmer Government. In 1923, Mr. Baker made a tour of northern Alberta, and was disturbed to find one area that was too poor to form a school district and had ten children growing up without a formal education. Mr. Baker came to Dr. Fred McNally, who later became the Deputy Minister, and told him he wanted somebody to send these children lessons by mail. Mr. Baker said this person would have to be a woman, she would have to be a motherly type, she would have to be a teacher, she would also have to be a stenographer, a linguist and several other things. Dr. McNally said he didn't know any one lady who had all these qualifications, but the one in the department who came the closest was Mrs. Elizabeth Sievwright. And she was chosen and set to work. But before we describe how she went about starting education-by-mail, perhaps we'd better go back farther and see how she came by these qualifications.

She was Highland Scottish, as we mentioned - born near Inverness - and as a girl went through the rugged training that the Scots considered necessary to make a teacher. The Scots figured it took as long to make a teacher as we figure it takes to make a doctor. After high school anyone aspiring to teach served a three-year apprenticeship, teaching and studying. He or she then got a provisional certificate. Then he or she went to normal school for 3 years. And then after that, why - university! Elizabeth passed up university, but she was familiar with the student life of Edinburgh, and the fiercely determined young Scots who would come from the country and live on bread, herring and oatmeal for the privilege of a higher education. She knew also about the home folks who would try to prove that "man can live on bread alone," to give the brightest member of the family a chance at university. None prize an education for its own sake like the Scots.

This was the attitude she brought to Edmonton with her in 1907. She came with her first husband, a brilliant civil engineer named John Menzies, who had read a good deal about Western Canada and wanted to look it over personally. They brought with them their infant son Dudley Menzies, who also became a Civil Engineer and is now public works commissioner for the city of Edmonton. They didn't intend to stay - just to look around - but John Menzies was persuaded to take an engineer's job on the proud new Parliament building. John Menzies was a relative of Premier Rutherford and had letters of introduction to him, but he never presented them, because in his Scottish way he didn't wish to appear to be asking for any favours. Premier Rutherford didn't know he had a relative here until John died, of tuberculosis, in 1909.

Mrs. Elizabeth Sievwright
Director
Correspondence School Branch
1923 - 1936

His widow and son then "went home" to Scotland, but Elizabeth had been there only a short time when she got a feeling that she must go back to Canada again. She couldn't quite explain the feeling, and her relatives couldn't understand it at all. But there is a divine restlessness in many Scots, and it drove her back to Edmonton in 1911.

With her education background she was invited into Alberta's fledgling Department of Education and began a new 25-year career in that field. She married again - Captain Sievwright of the Provincial Auditor's Branch - and was widowed again in 1916, when Captain Sievwright died just before leaving for France in the 194th Battalion.

But this did not shake a calm Scottish conviction that things work out for the best, and in her work as counsellor to Normal School students she helped them work things out for the best.

Much of the Province was still in the pioneering stage. Farmers in areas of 16 square miles were forming school districts, putting up one-room schools and hiring teachers.

Mrs. Sievwright worked from a wall-size map of Alberta. When a new graduate teacher would come in and say she wanted to teach near Castor or St. Paul or Ponoka, Mrs. Sievwright would go to the map and look for a one-room school near Castor or St. Paul or Ponoka.

In 1923 Education Minister Perren Baker made a tour of the back country north of Edmonton and was pained to find one area where the settlers were too poor to form a school district, and there were ten children growing up without formal instruction. That was when he went to Dr. McNally and said he wanted somebody to send these children lessons by mail, someone who was a motherly type, a teacher, a stenographer, a linguist and several other things. That was when Dr. McNally recommended Mrs. Sievwright.

Mr. Baker was sure of only two points in this pioneering project. Something had to be done, and it had to be done with no money because the department had no money to do it. Just how it was to be done was left up to Mrs. Sievwright. She not only had to scratch for paper and supplies and stamp money, but she had to start from scratch in making up the lessons because juvenile correspondence courses were a new field. Commercialized courses for adults were well established then. Magazines advertised courses in everything from accounting to teaching puny men how to lick bullies in 24 body-building lessons. But there was nothing for the ten children growing up without a school forty miles northeast of Edmonton. Mrs. Sievwright had to figure that out.

Correspondence Education Becomes an Integral Part of the Educational System in Alberta

The experiment in education-by-mail had ceased to be an experiment by 1930 and was on the threshold of expansion. This resulted both from the natural growth which publicity and success had caused, and from economic conditions which were forcing local school boards to curtail the period of school operation or to close schools altogether.

Sadie K. Robinson was appointed in 1930 to assist Mrs. Sievwright. That year saw the greatest enrollment since correspondence education in Alberta began. Desks were moved over to make room both for the new assistant and for the growing stacks of lessons now inundating that corner of the Department. For some time the two women were the entire Branch offering correspondence courses during the day and calling on charitable organizations and individuals after hours to donate textbooks, scribblers, clothing, blankets and other amenities. In his report that year, McNally stated:

> Too much cannot be said regarding the warm appreciation which is received at the Department from the homes, and it is exceedingly encouraging to the officials responsible for the work to feel that the parents are behind them in this effort. Judging from the results it appears that this venture in education is well worthwhile, and that it is meeting a much felt want in the frontiers.

Deputy Minister J.T. Ross, also reporting on the correspondence courses, said:

> The correspondence work provided for children who are living in unorganized territory and in those districts where the schools are not operating has advanced rapidly under the capable management of the staff of that branch of the Department. The enrollment has increased steadily and during this year has reached the five hundred mark ... Eighteen students received assistance in the work of grade VIII, and of the fourteen who wrote on the Departmental Examinations thirteen were successful in passing with creditable standing.

Mrs. Sievwright and Miss Robinson shared the experience of the increasing flood of lessons that were coming in with the deepening of the Great Depression. Reporting for the year 1931 McNally wrote:

> The demand for these courses continued to grow, and the past year has been the busiest one in the history of the School, when over 500 pupils worked under the direction of the staff. The results have been gratifying, and seem to justify the expenditure of effort and time involved.

One interesting reference in the 1931 *Annual Report* was to the Alberta Correspondence School. This is believed to be the first time that this name was used. By 1932, however, McNally had reverted to merely the Correspondence School in his report.

> During the past year the work of the Correspondence School has increased by leaps and bounds until it has reached the stage where as many pupils are enrolled in one term as were formerly added in a year. The increase in numbers is due, no doubt, to the fact that present conditions have forced some schools to close. During the September-December term of 1932, three hundred fifty new pupils were enrolled, making a total for the year of over 800. The total enrollment since the inception of the Correspondence School is now almost 2500.

Increasing Demand for Correspondence Education

In his contribution to the 1932 *Annual Report,* Deputy Minister J.T. Ross indicated the services of four full-time teachers were required by the Correspondence School. At this point we can only guess who these two additional teachers were. One may have been a Miss Freda Huntbach, who worked when Mrs. Sievwright was in charge. The other may have been one of Helen Bolton and Ellen Price, who were on the staff in 1936 when Mrs. Sievwright retired and Miss Robinson took her place. Economic conditions were resulting in the closing of many schools, and Mrs. Sievwright and Miss Robinson felt themselves obliged to help some students by sending out clothing and other essentials. The same economic conditions were probably responsible for another development which would eventually change the very nature of the Correspondence School. In 1933 agreements were concluded with the Institute of Applied Art in Edmonton, and the Western Canada Institute in Calgary, for correspondence courses at the high school level. This service made it possible for students in areas where there was no high school, or where the high school had recently been closed because of economic conditions, to continue with their education. This service, unlike that of the Correspondence School, was not provided free. Applications for the high school correspondence courses were made with the office of the Registrar of the Department of Education, which also collected the tuition fees. These were placed in trust and disbursed to the two Institutes, students from Red Deer south being assigned to Calgary, the others to Edmonton. The government subsidized the cost from general revenue.

Apparently in the first years of the experiment in correspondence education, no one seems to have been sure who was to report on the education-by-mail service. Some years reports were written by the Deputy Minister; in other years reports were written by the Supervisor of Schools; and in some years reports were written by both. In the middle and late thirties, when McNally had become Deputy Minister, both the Supervisor of Schools and the Registrar reported. Although Mrs. Sievwright and Miss Robinson most likely provided the figures for these reports, neither lady ever reported as Director of the Correspondence School. The reasons for this are worthy of study, having grown naturally out of the evolution of the education-by-mail experiment. Before the reorganization of 1939, correspondence education was divided among six offices of the Department. First, of course, was that of the Deputy Minister, where policy and personnel decisions were taken and where the link with the Minister was maintained. Then there was the office of the Supervisor of Schools, where correspondence programmes were given general approval. The office of the Registrar was responsible for the registration of students in Grades Nine to Twelve. The General Office was in charge of the collection and refund of fees, payments to the two Institutes providing correspondence services for Grades Nine to Twelve, supplies and equipment for the Correspondence School, and of course, payroll. The Correspondence School was in charge of instruction in Grades One to Eight. Finally the Examinations Branch was in charge of checking for prerequisites for high school programmes and courses, and for adherence to programme and graduation regulations.

The organization described here worked well enough when only one or two people were involved in the work of the Correspondence School under Mrs. Sievwright's leadership, and when those registered for courses with the two Institutes were not too numerous. By 1936, however, when Mrs. Sievwright retired and Miss Robinson succeeded her, administrative changes of some kind had to be made.

Miss Robinson In Charge

Miss Sadie K. Robinson was an experienced teacher when she went to work "under the dome" as she called it. She had taught at Forestburg in 1921 and 1922, and at Provost in 1923 and 1924. Life in these two villages on the prairie was no longer in the pioneer stage, and the schools were well equipped and comfortable, not unlike city schools. Then, after a year spent back in Edmonton, Miss Robinson went to Innisfree, in the parklands east of Vegreville. Miss Robinson taught in Innisfree from 1926 to 1929 before seeking employment in the bush. In 1930, Miss Robinson went to teach in Forest School No. 3171, east of Athabasca. This experience may well have been the most decisive in her career. Compared to the communities she had seen at Forestburg, Provost and Innisfree, everything in the Athabasca country seemed to be at its beginnings. Roads, houses, schools — all seemed to be at some kind of basic minimum, and rain or cold caused one kind of crisis or another. Miss Robinson never

forgot the kind of poverty she saw in some of the homes. She had no way of knowing that, in the 1930's, the situation was to get much worse.

Mrs. Sievwright and Miss Robinson were really two of a kind in the way they viewed the work of the Correspondence Branch. Daily they came to work in the building where the Province's decisions were made and immersed themselves in the problems of children whose needs became painfully obvious. As the Depression deepened and the closing of more and more country schools meant increasing stacks of lessons to correct, the two teachers tended to react by calling upon their own resources rather than by bringing the needs of their Branch to the attention of those in authority. All informants agree that both Mrs. Sievwright and Miss Robinson dipped into their own pockets for things that this Branch needed, or, occasionally, spoke to a club or church group soliciting funds or clothing for the children they were teaching by mail.

By the time Miss Robinson had taken Mrs. Sievwright's place in February of 1936, the new government of Alberta had been in power for six months. Mr. Aberhart, the new premier, was also Minister of Education; McNally was now the Deputy Minister. No real changes, however, had come to the Correspondence Branch. The four teachers just could not keep up with the flood of lessons. Work fell behind, often as much as two months. This was bad enough in itself, but; as new lessons were sent out with the corrected exercises, pupils were often left without work to do for weeks. Pupils at this time received no marks or letter gradings. This was in line with the policy that pupils should not be compared.

Teachers were not assigned to grades. Every teacher corrected the work of all grades. Teachers typed their own letters. These letters were very important, since all instructions, recommendations and reports were embodied in them. The average length of letter was three to four pages of thirteen-inch paper, double-spaced. The Director signed all letters, so that the students did not know the names of the teachers who corrected their work.

The teachers typed all notes required for pupils. With the use of carbons, five copies could be done at once. The hectograph was introduced. When the hectograph-typewriter ribbon was discovered, the temporary stenographer assisted with these notes. The teachers assembled the pages of the courses.

Miss Sadie K. Robinson
Director
Correspondence School Branch
1936 - 1939

Old Sunday School papers, attractive booklets from insurance companies and library books were sometimes sent out with corrected lessons. This duty was done by the Director. A set of lessons, when returned to the pupil, often contained a surprise.

Many samples were received from publishing companies in anticipation of textbook changes. These samples were turned over to the Correspondence School Branch, as it was now often called. From time to time new books were added, and a library began to develop. Shortly after Miss Robinson became Director, the books were carefully graded and arranged on shelves. Teachers could then send these books to students.

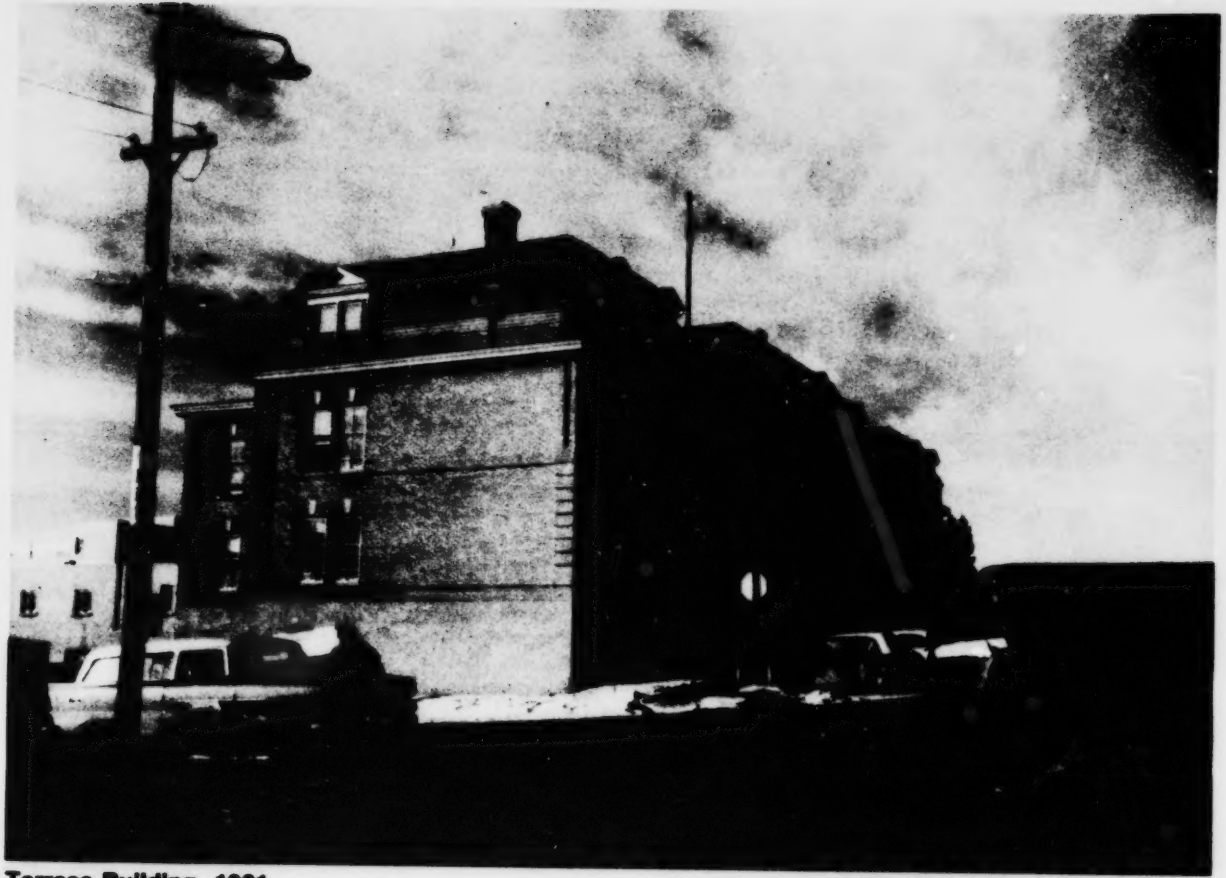
The practice of sending Christmas cards to pupils was established even though the appropriation of funds for the Correspondence Branch — often called the "Cinderella Branch" — was usually small. The teachers collected used Christmas cards from friends, erased the names and sent them with the lessons. The response from pupils was immediate and enthusiastic.

In 1936 the staff consisted of four teachers: Sadie K. Robinson (Director), Helen Bolton, Ethel Hopkins and Ellen Price.

Move To The Terrace Building

Some time during 1937 the Correspondence School Branch moved into a large office in the old Terrace Building, but soon found itself occupying a smaller office.

This historic building, the first permanent home of the Alberta Legislature, was immediately east and a little south of where the Legislature Building stands. An article about this building appeared in a 1943 issue of the Correspondence School Branch's Intermediate Newspaper. Since the "old Terrace Building" no longer exists, this description of the second home of the Correspondence School is of considerable interest historically.



Terrace Building, 1961

Provincial Archives of Alberta
Photograph Collection

The Home of the Correspondence School

Our Branch of the Department of Education is located in the Terrace Building. After leaving the street car at the north end of the High Level Bridge, on one hundred and ninth street, you may pass in front of the Main Legislative Building. This is of brown stone and has a large dome. There are wide steps leading up to a colonnade of huge pillars. After you have passed this building, turn to your right on one hundred and seventh street. You will see rolling grassy lawns as you walk along. These are dotted with shrubs and evergreens. In summer there are beds of gay flowering plants. At the foot of the lawns between sixth and seventh streets you will find the Terrace Building — a large red brick structure facing north. There are two front entrances. To reach our offices you may choose the westerly one.

After entering the building, you climb a long flight of steps. You will notice a door on the right with the words "Assistant Chief Boiler Inspectors." Don't be discouraged. You are in the right bulding. Turn to your left, and after walking a few yards you will see two offices, a large room occupied by Mr. Bruce, our Acting Director, and a small one used by Miss Dame, his secretary. Beyond these doors is the Intermediate Section.

Opening out of our main office is a smaller room which has a splendid view of the grounds below the Legislative Building. This is Miss Hopkins' office. There is a door from Mr. Bruce's office into our room, too, so that we are in close touch with both our Section Supervisor and our Director. Beyond our office is the High School Section. Most of the members of the staff are in one large office, while others occupy smaller rooms nearby.

The clerical staff use the first floor and basement rooms on the east side of the Terrace Building. It is most interesting to visit their quarters, too. You will then see the work involved in typing, stencilling, mimeographing, and assembling lessons, and in recording lessons graded and ready to be returned to the correspondence students.

I am sure you will be glad to examine the Intermediate Section's main office more closely, for it is in this office that your lessons will be graded. Each of the instructors has an office desk, with a basket for lessons that are brought to her daily and a basket for lessons that are marked each day. We all have the texts and references for our subjects on our desks, and, of course, plenty of red ink. In the spring and summer months we enjoy the sunshine from the two large south windows, but in winter we receive only indirect sunlight.

The windows face a deep well, as it is called, in the building itself, and from November to March the sun is too low to shine into the room. Miss Hopkins has provided many interesting pictures for our walls. We have three large maps, too, but still you would find our office quite different from an ordinary classroom.

Our office hours at present are from 8:30 to 11:30 in the morning, and from 1:00 to 4:30 in the afternoon. On Saturday the hours are from 8:30 until 12 o'clock. The work of the Correspondence School Branch continues during the summer months. The instructors have three weeks' holidays, but not all take their holidays at the same time. There is always someone in the office who will be very glad to see you when you pay a visit to the Correspondence School.

New Procedures

In 1937 the teachers requested that they be assigned to definite grades. This was done, with the following assignments decided upon:

Sadie K. Robinson	Grades Three and Four
Ethel Hopkins	Grades One and Five
Ellen Price	Grades Two and Six
Helen Bolton	Grades Seven and Eight

The teachers also requested the privilege of signing their own letters. This was done, too, but Miss Robinson continued to check and countersign them. There was a hint of more changes to come. The suggestion was made that Grade Nine be added to the work of the Correspondence School Branch in the fall of 1937, but for some reason the proposal was not implemented. The Grade Nine work would have been assigned to Helen Bolton and Ethel Hopkins, leaving the work of eight grades to be divided between Price and Robinson. One can only conjecture that the proposal to take over Grade Nine was not coupled with a proposal to add another teacher or two to the staff. At this time the British Columbia Correspondence School had practically the same number of pupils; but the staff consisted of a director, nine teachers and three stenographers! Although stenographers were sometimes available for the hectic winter season, Miss Robinson did practically all the filing. With the increase in complexity of the operation Miss Robinson introduced some departures from the "family" system set up by Mrs. Sievwright and the use of some form letters to give instructions for correspondence work.

In these years before the reorganization of 1939, teachers were classified as clerks and paid $720 for a twelve-month year. Miss Robinson, of course, received more than that. At this time teachers in country schools were to receive not less than $840 per year, unless the employing board had the written permission of the Minister to pay less. Teachers at the Correspondence School Branch were not members of the Alberta Teachers' Association, but practised their profession in splendid isolation just a few blocks from the central office of that organization. The Civil Service classification was being drawn up, and some interesting anomalies were to develop with the reorganization soon to take place.

It is believed that Ruth Bell came onto the staff in 1938, the same year that arrangements were made for students from the Northwest Territories to take correspondence courses based on the Alberta curriculum.

Although Perren Baker's education-by-mail experiment had solved problems for hundreds of pupils, it had also created problems of administration for the Department of Education. The Department now had a special kind of five-room school on its hands, and was doing administrative work for two private Institutes, one in Calgary and one in Edmonton. Those, like McNally, who were watching the war clouds gather over Europe sensed that the need for correspondence education services was going to become, if anything, more pressing. Something would have to be done to simplify things.

PART II

The Reorganization

The Need For Change

As we have seen, administrative problems in the Department of Education were making a reorganization of the correspondence services desirable. Other trends were at work, too. With the introduction of the "credit" system in the high school, standing in subjects, credits towards a high school diploma, could no longer be earned by simply writing a departmental examination. Therefore, the Department got involved. By 1939, with the change from the traditional eight grades of public school and four grades of high school to six grades of elementary, three of intermediate (later junior high), and three of high school, the Department had decided to take over all correspondence education, adding Grades Nine to Twelve at the rate of one grade per year.

As G. Fred McNally, the Deputy Minister, saw it, the problem was to find a suitable director, outline the nature of the problem to that director, and then stand behind that person in adopting the proposed changes. The changes would be expensive, but that could not be helped. McNally thought he knew of a teacher that he could bring in to view the problem impartially and implement solutions. There was a young man who had been a member of his boys' club, the Knights of the Cross, associated with Strathcona Baptist Church. He had taken further education and was teaching in a one-room high school at Holden, Alberta. McNally invited John W. Chalmers to take the position.

John W. Chalmers

Chalmers was born and raised in Manitoba. He had studied at the University of Manitoba, receiving his B.A. in 1931. He attended the University of Alberta and received the Diploma in Education in 1932, being a member of the third class to graduate from the recently founded School of Education. During the next years he taught school, earned his M.A. in Education at the University of Alberta, graduating in 1935, and acted as educational editor, correspondence course writer and marker for the Institute of Applied Arts. This experience at the Institute placed Chalmers in a unique position where the carrying out of the new proposal was concerned. Chalmers accepted the position and began work on July 2, 1939.

John W. Chalmers
Director
Correspondence School Branch
1939 - 1946

Chalmers' first task was not at all what he had expected, and neither his education nor his experience at the Institute had prepared him for it. No one, including the Deputy Minister, had told Miss Robinson that her correspondence school was to be absorbed into the new Correspondence School Branch, and that she would be answerable to a new director. Moreover, she had not been informed that two of her grades, seven and eight, were to become the responsibility of a new section, the Intermediate (later Junior High), along with the teaching staff involved. Nonetheless, Miss Robinson remained with the Correspondence School Branch — now often referred to as the Correspondence School Branch — working with both Chalmers and his successor. Those who worked with her in those years knew that she continued to have the same caring attitude toward her pupils and her work; on occasion, money and materials appeared from mysterious sources when a special need arose, just as in the old days with Mrs. Sievwright.

Correspondence School Branch Established

The space assigned to the new Correspondence School Branch was in a large, open area on the western end of the top floor of the old Terrace Building. This area, it is believed, had once been a barrack of the R.C.M.P., and probably, before that, of the Alberta Provincial Police. Chalmers was told that the Director's office had previously been the men's shower and washroom!

In time the Correspondence School Branch was to take over more and more space in the west end of the top floor of the "old Terrace Building," and expand onto the second floor and into the basement where the print shop was located. The support staff was constantly running up and down stairs distributing and returning lessons and files, receiving, sorting and distributing mail.

The objective for 1939 was the taking over of Grade Nine. There was such a great increase in enrollment following upon this decision that teachers and stenographers had to be added to the staff. Helen Bolton and Ethel Hopkins were moved from the Elementary Section to the Intermediate Section, and their places were taken by Eleanor Alexander and Iris Morris. Vada McMahan, Stanley Rands, Nancy Thompson and Janet Wells completed the first Intermediate staff.

Courses prepared by the Western Canada Institute and the Institute of Applied Arts were used until the teachers could prepare new ones. The new courses contained twenty lessons which were mimeographed or multilithed and assembled as workbooks. A complete set of new courses was also written for Grades Seven and Eight.

The Grade Nine option courses were Art, Junior High Business and Agriculture. Agriculture was taught by special permission from the Department since it was not taught in other schools. The teachers who taught Junior Business were obliged to qualify by taking a short course at Summer School, where the rudiments of bookkeeping and office practice were taught.

If the new Correspondence School Branch was really to have its own identity, it had to have its own Administrative Section. Stanley Kenworthy joined the Branch as an administrator, and soon became head of the newly organized Administrative Section. Kenworthy had a keen mind, sound bookkeeping knowledge, uncompromising integrity, and shrewd business sense. He also had the ability to inspire loyalty and devotion in those working in his Section, and a strong morale developed. The girls got along well together both at work and at play and decided to organize a club called the Stenostatics. (See the article entitled "Stenostatics.")

On more than one occasion Kenworthy was offered a promotion to the general office of the Department of Education. His answer was usually, "Why should I go to the general office to do work less important than what I am doing, just because you offer me more money?" He eventually did and in 1949 transferred to the School Grants Branch of the Department of Education. He later moved to the Department of Public Works, retiring as Deputy Minister.

For the first four years the Correspondence School Branch was faced with the problems that arose from the original Departmental decision to take over all correspondence school work in the High School. Thus in 1939 service had to be supplied to Grade Nine at the same time that courses were being prepared for Grades Nine and Ten. In 1940 service had to be provided for Grade Ten while courses were being prepared for Grade Eleven, and so on.

Along with the need for new courses, there was a need to develop suitable forms, routines and practices. For example, for each student a file was opened, the files being arranged alphabetically by surname, at first in one or two cabinets, much as Mrs. Sievwright had done by family and Miss Robinson had done by individual. As the number of students grew, however, it was not just a question of adding new cabinets. As long as the alphabetical system was used, the registration of new students required the placing of files between existing ones.

New Administrative Systems

A system of "file by name, find by number" was introduced. Files were numbered chronologically by number as they arrived in the Branch and filed accordingly. The system could expand at will, filling cabinet after cabinet without the necessity of displacing previously existing files. At the same time an index card was prepared with the student's name and file number on it. This alphabetical card file was thus an index to the filing system. At the same time students were instructed to enter their file number on every lesson and other communication with the Branch. Thus it was usually unnecessary to refer to the card index at all.

"The Stenostatics"

They may tear down the old Terrace Building, but what can never be torn down, nor destroyed, are the friendships formed there nearly twenty years ago!

So began an article in a 1961 issue of the *Civil Service Bulletin* entitled "The Stenostatics." The article went on,

> In 1942 a group of girls working together at the Correspondence School Branch banded themselves together into a club which they called "The Stenostatics." Those were the days of World War II, and there seemed plenty to be done in the way of entertaining members of the armed forces — a war-time effort into which they threw themselves wholeheartedly. Much of their spare time was spent in organizing parties, dances, hikes, wiener roasts and the like, to which men from various branches of the Service were invited and for which, it is understood, they stood in line in order to attend. The club met twice a month, at which time parcels of food, clothing and cigarettes were sent overseas.

The article explained,

> There gradually grew up among these girls a bond of friendship which became stronger as time went on. This was evidenced at work as well as at play. In no other government office could there have been closer co-operation among its employees and a feeling of working together to accomplish the most good. If one was particularly busy, the others would all pitch in and help until the job was finished. This was in no small measure due to the admiration and respect accorded their friend and former "boss," Mr. S.E. Kenworthy. His unfailing guidance and sympathetic attitude toward his "girls," has very often been the subject of discussion at meetings of the Stenostatics over the years.

Picnic, May 1941

Front Row (left to right): Elsie Gillis, Grace Adamson, John Werry, Iris Werry, Elizabeth Werry, Rose Pawluk, Diane Werry, Jessie Moderwell, little girl DeBow, John Chalmers, Pat Kenworthy.

Second Row (left to right): Mrs. B. Walker, Ethel Hopkins, Mrs. J. Sheppy, Betty Renaud, Janet Wells, Nancy Thompson, Alice Stephenson, Mrs. S. Kenworthy, Jean Kenworthy, Mrs. DeBow, Mrs. J.W. Chalmers, J.W. Chalmers.

Third Row (left to right): Stan Rands, Helen Brager, J.I. Sheppy, Jessie Cowles, Christine Cormack, Vada McMahan.

Fourth Row (left to right): Margaret Ripley, Bernal Walker, June Geisler, June Alderdice, Vivian Cogan, Suzanne Dame, Helen Soldan, S.E. Kenworthy.

Fifth Row (left to right): Mr. DeBow, David Smith, A. Brown, Reta Rix, E. Schonning.

Kenworthy eventually was transferred, and became first Assistant Deputy and later Deputy Minister of Public Works. The "girls" became wives and mothers or were transferred to other departments. By 1961, when the article was published, only one, Claire Hughes, was still at the Correspondence School Branch.

On October 6, 1973, the Stenostatics held their thirtieth annual banquet at the Faculty Club of the University of Alberta. The guest of honor was none other than "Kenny" himself, who came all the way from Victoria to be with his "girls" on this special occasion, the only man, incidentally, ever to be accorded such a privilege, "Ladies Only" having always been the rule. On Sunday, the 7th, a tea was held at the Regency to which many old friends, particularly teachers who were at the Correspondence School Branch in the old days, were invited. In 1983, "The Stenostatics" - fewer now - are still active and looking forward to future happy times together.

A complete list of the members of "Stenostatics" follows: Cecile Bellerive, Helene Bolle, Norma Bruce, Teenie Cormack, Suzanne Dame, Beth Dyer, Freda Groves, Claire Hughes, Frances John, Olga Klodniski, June Lane, Elaine Peacock, Helen Roberts, Joyce Sands, Audrey Scott, Frieda Spady, Margaret Watson, Regina Wilson.

In a very real sense, the files are the memory of correspondence education. As a student's record must be found instantly, the job of the file clerk is crucial. This is true at any time. In the early 1940's it was all the more important because of the tremendous and unexpected increase in registrations. Probable causes of this were the increase in Alberta's armed forces, and the assumption of the fees for correspondence courses by the newly established school divisions. An immediate result was a constantly growing teaching and support staff at a time when the supply of newly trained teachers was steadily decreasing.

Teachers joining the Intermediate and High School staff in 1940 were David Smith, Margaret Ripley, B.E. Walker, Elsie McCall, Alice Stephenson, Mrs. Iris W. Werry, and Grace Adamson. No new teachers were added to the Elementary Section.

The Intermediate Section was separated from the High School Section and moved to the second floor. The High School Section was moved down to the west end of the second floor.

The Civil Service Classification scheme was being drawn up. In the meantime there was no regular salary schedule. Teachers added to the staff during 1939 and 1940 received much larger salaries than those with several years of service. Understandably this caused feelings of resentment until the discrepancies were dealt with.

There were problems to solve in accounting and requisition routines when the Correspondence School Branch took over these functions from the General Office. The Department had only partly realized the extent to which it was running a special kind of multi-room school; procedures of sorting incoming lessons and distributing them to the proper instructors, recording grades and returning them to the students had to be handed over to the Correspondence School Branch Standardizing of formats of instructional material had also to be carried out.

The loan of free reading books to correspondence students had always been a feature of correspondence education, having usually been handled by first Mrs. Sievwright and then by Miss Robinson. The Correspondence School Branch at first required a deposit of five dollars against which loss or damage was assessed and a balance, if any, returned to the student. Considerable bookkeeping was required. Early in the new organization's existence it was noticed that very few books had been lost or damaged, yet hundreds of deposits had been received and returned. It was decided to abolish the deposit altogether. The savings in staff time far outweighed the cost of lost or damaged books.

At the end of 1941 the Correspondence School Branch library contained over 1200 books and 1000 pamphlets. The library had been catalogued during the slack season in September, using a modification of the Cutter system, a system suitable for small libraries.

New Instructional Techniques

Science Kits

One method of improving the quality of correspondence education was the introduction of science kits. Believing that practical experience was important in Grade Nine science, the Correspondence School Branch assembled a simple kit of apparatus and supplies and a manual of simple, safe experiments for the students. These were sold to Grade Nine students, or their sponsors, for a small fee. This service presented no particular problem, but was one more job for the busy support staff.

Radio Broadcasts

In 1940 the Correspondence School Branch produced the first radio series of the Department of Education. These were broadcast over the University of Alberta station, CKUA. The broadcasts were designed to strengthen and personalize the relationship between the Correspondence School and the students. Although programmes and scripts were prepared at the Branch, the teachers aired them in their own time, and without compensation. Although this was not the first educational programming in Alberta — work was done as early as 1937 — it was, nevertheless, pioneering in a very real sense.

One of the first subjects tried by radio was French. Here an effort was made to give students within range of CKUA some practice at listening to the language, even if it was not yet possible to give practice at speaking. To ensure that students followed the weekly programmes, each broadcast ended with a short assignment, usually a brief dictation, that students were expected to submit within a week.

Another programme, "Choose Your World," was based on the one-credit course called Vocations and Guidance. The first method used in preparing this programme involved having members of certain occupations talk about their careers. The result, according to J.W. Chalmers, was not very satisfactory. It was not hard to persuade professionals — a lawyer, a physician, a teacher, one of the community's businessmen — to talk about their work. To enlist people from other occupations, however — plumbers, bus drivers, store clerks, mechanics — proved nearly impossible. Neither their practical training nor their experience had prepared them for such an ordeal.

Also those who agreed to speak invariably spoke far above the heads of the intended teenage audience, and they tended to emphasize the positive aspects of an occupation and to gloss over its disadvantages. J.W. Chalmers told how the Correspondence School Branch attempted to overcome this difficulty:

> We took another tack. In the forties Ash Wednesday was a holiday for the Provincial Civil Service, but for practically no other groups except the Separate School staff. On one Ash Wednesday the professional staff gave up their holiday to visit a great many locations to obtain on-site information about various occupations. We visited stores, factories, restaurants, truck depots. My own assignment was the power plant. We talked not only to supervisors and managers but also to workers on the floor, the latter often to the apprehension and reluctance of the upper echelons. We sought information on many things.

Having assembled the material on vocations, committees at the Correspondence School Branch wrote the radio scripts and produced the programmes. No doubt the productions, from scripts to acting, were amateurish, especially at first. On one occasion Elsie Park Gowan, capable and experienced in radio drama, graciously came and talked to the staff about scripting programmes. Improvements followed.

For high school students there was a weekly half-hour series on current events and "These United Nations," featuring something about each country then fighting against the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis. The list of countries covered grew longer as the conflict deepened and included the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth countries, France, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, the U.S.S.R., the United States, China, Brazil and others. Each programme concentrated on the war effort of these allied countries.

By 1945, the Correspondence School Branch was on the air each night of the school week over radio station CKUA. Monday night featured Nancy Thompson, and some aspect of literature Mrs. Mary Wiens with "We Enjoy Music" was aired on Tuesday. Students heard Jack Yates discuss current events Wednesday night in "Today's Horizons." "Choose Your World" was directed by Frank Page on Thursdays. Helen MacMillan wound up the week on Friday with "Adventures of Science."

Expansion of Services

The special project for 1941 was the preparation of the Grade Twelve courses while giving service to Grade Eleven students. More teachers and further expansion of quarters became necessary. Additions to the High School staff included J.I. Sheppy, W.P. McIntyre, W.S. MacDonald, S.W. Hopper, W.E. Kostash, Margaret M. Allan, Elizabeth Harvie, Helen K. Wood and Elsie L. Simmermon. New members of the Intermediate Section were George F. Bruce (Supervisor), Dorothy L. Pybus and Malvina Kalancha. Joining the Elementary staff were Verna Broughton and Ruth Lomas. The Correspondence School Branch said good-bye to Ruth Bell, Eleanor Alexander and B.E. Walker, who decided to return to classroom work; to Margaret Ryley, who got married; and to David Smith, who went to the Y.M.C.A. to do war work with the R.C.A.F.

No salary schedule existed for public employees, although, as has been mentioned, one was developing gradually. Salaries ranged from around $1000 for an elementary teacher to $1500 for a high school teacher. John W. Chalmers commented,

Despite these low salaries, it was possible to attract fine teachers to the staff, some of them high school teacher-principals of small institutions. The Correspondence School Branch provided an opportunity to move to an urban centre, to further one's university education, to broaden one's professional experience, to associate rather closely with professional associates of varied interests, abilities and personalities. Thus first-rate people came to the Branch, and if they stayed only two or three years, others equally bright were found to replace them. For the Branch, far from being a dead end, soon became known as a gateway to further opportunities, for in it one came to the notice of senior departmental staff. At least three (Hooper, Sheppy, Walker) in addition to the Director soon became divisional superintendents: others found challenging openings at the federal, provincial and local levels.

Remuneration slowly improved, first by a cost-of-living bonus resulting from inflation due to the outbreak of World War II. One complication in remuneration was that at first, one quarter of remuneration was in social credit scrip of limited acceptability, but it presented no insuperable problems and was abandoned about 1941.

The War Effort

In 1940 Canada's war effort began to be felt at the Correspondence School Branch in a very new and unique way. The Canadian army was discovering that the average level of education of its recruits was only Grade Seven. The hard times of the previous decade had left their mark on Canada's youth. The better educated men tended to choose the R.C.A.F. and the R.C.N. when they enlisted. The army, however, needed educated people as much as the other services did. Accordingly, with the cooperation of the various departments of education, Canadian Legion Educational Services (C.L.E.S.) proposed to provide correspondence courses at every level to high school graduation. In the summer of 1940 government correspondence school directors met in Winnipeg to organize. Each correspondence school from Nova Scotia to British Columbia undertook to adapt part of its programme, originally written for children and teenagers, to the interests of adults. Alberta's share was the English and social studies courses in Grades Nine, Ten and Eleven. C.L.E.S. then published these and other courses in booklets small enough to slip into a tunic pocket. Thus eventually a complete school programme, including some secondary technical courses, became available without charge to Canadian servicemen and women. The provincial correspondence schools not only provided the courses free, but also, for the first year, the instruction as well for personnel serving in Canada. Lessons of overseas personnel were processed in Britain.

Thereafter, C.L.E.S. provided a small remuneration for each lesson graded, and Correspondence School Branch instructors did the work in their own time. Until after World War II, however, the Branch continued to handle the mailing and distribution of the papers, acting as a line of communication between teacher and student.

Nearly 40 years after the end of that war it is difficult to evoke the atmosphere of those wartime days. Two months after the reorganization began at the Correspondence School Branch, Hitler's armies invaded Poland, and the period of appeasement came to an end. Shortly after that, on September 10th, Canada declared war. From the beginning the news was all bad, as Polish forces were soon overwhelmed. If there was a lull during the winter of the "phoney" war in 1939 and 1940, it was only to be followed by an avalanche of more bad news in the spring of 1940, as country after country came under Axis occupation or control. The voice of Winston Churchill came to us by radio, telling us that Britain would fight on and exhorting us all to greater efforts. Many listened to the old man with more admiration for how he said it than belief in eventual victory.

Khaki and blue uniforms of the Canadian army and R.C.A.F. were so commonly seen on Edmonton's streets that people ceased to notice them. In time the passionate purple of the Royal Australian Air Force was not at all uncommon as the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan brought men from all over the world to learn to fly. Tiger moths hedge-hopped throughout the Province, and one character flew his training plane under the High Level Bridge not far from the old Terrace Building. There were few Alberta families that did not have a father, son or relative in the armed services early in the war, and before long many a family had a daughter in uniform. In some communities it became almost impossible to hold a normal social function because so many of the men were away in the armed forces. Needless to say, ways were found to fill the void thus created; and those working at the Correspondence School Branch were no exception. The following article by "S.F.J.," written in 1953, gives something of the atmosphere of the wartime years at the Correspondence School Branch.

Co-operative Projects at the Correspondence School Branch - by S.F.J.

On this, my tenth anniversary as a part-time teacher at the Correspondence School Branch, my thoughts flow back through the years—the years of marking lessons, writing courses, inaugurating new filing systems, years of running for street cars and buses, carrying a paper bag lunch, meeting new people, and forming lasting friendships. But in and around these thoughts flows a secondary current of memories, associated particularly with the one-and-a-half hour noon break, and that is recollections of all the co-operative projects that have been undertaken at the Correspondence School Branch.

One of the earlier projects I recall was knitting diamond socks for Christmas presents for the male members of our families. Quite an undertaking it was too, for in those war-time days wool was expensive and hard to get, not all of us could knit, and only two of the group had every made diamond socks. Each noon hour lunches were disposed of in a hurry, and then the knitters gathered in the lightest corner. Clickety-clack, clickety-clack, how the needles and the tongues flew! That was when I learned "to turn a heel," and I've been grateful ever since to the girl who showed me how. Since then I've made dozens of pairs of fancy socks, but never without a passing thought of our Correspondence School Branch Project—Diamond Socks for Christmas.

Mention of those war years reminds me that some of our girls married R.A.F. men and left the comfort and security of the Correspondence School Branch office for the doubtful attraction of war-torn Britain.

Their woe-begone letters, telling of English food, or rather, lack of food, engineered another of our co-operative projects, namely, packing food parcels for them and for English relatives of our staff. Our office heads delicately suggested they forego their usual Christmas gifts from us, and the money we would have spent on them plus generous contributions from the whole staff went to make up an overseas food fund. As the mailing date approached, the office blossomed out into a veritable grocery store. Packages of raisins, sugar, tinned butter, etc., pushed lessons into the background. The writing of notes, labels, and addresses, and the assembling of the goods into the many parcels was fun, and was something which could hardly have been undertaken individually. Another year, too, I remember, our office heads again did without their Christmas gifts. This time the money went to swell the coffers of our Milk for Britain fund.

Reverting to the packing parcels project, I am reminded of the time the Grade V teachers played Santa Claus. One of their pupils was a small boy who had lost his leg in a railway accident. He lived alone with his mother in a little cabin in an isolated wooded area. Christmas could have been just another day to them, if it had not been for the arrival of a wonderful parcel packed by the Correspondence School Branch Grade V staff.

The exchange of magazines and recipes might be called a project too, and one that has continued steadily during my ten years' sojourn here. Some of my best recipes I owe to the Correspondence School Branch.

Back to the handicrafts again. Besides diamond socks we have delved into the mysteries of smocked aprons, attractive jewellery moulded from salt and flour, suede leather pixie slippers, dainty petit point pictures, as well as some charming Christmas table centers. Each was made on an oval of plywood, which in turn was covered with a salt and flour mixture and sprinkled with artificial snow. With this as a base all manner of Christmas motifs were fashioned, working with candles, cones, red-and-silver balls, tiny reindeer, and plenty of "glitter." Such activities would have been difficult and expensive had they been undertaken alone; collectively they were not.

One spring we worked later than usual. The office grew oppressive and hot. Life was dull at the Correspondence School Branch It was then we decided that the noon period could be most profitably spent in the West End swimming pool. It wouldn't have been much fun going over there alone, but together we had a wonderful time. There was a rumour to the effect that the Director did not approve of swimming suits swinging from the windows of the Correspondence School Branch, but it was only a rumour. No complaints were ever voiced. After our refreshing dip, the office felt bearable again, and the work of marking lessons speeded up.

Last spring when the notice slips came around that our work was over until the fall rush should begin again we decided to celebrate our return to the status of full-time housewives by having a dinner of Chinese food. The last noon hour arrived. We pushed several desks together, spread the resulting table with a beautiful lace cloth, and centred it with a bouquet of spring flowers. Then promptly at twelve o'clock twenty-four orders of twelve different Chinese dishes were delivered, piping hot to us. We sampled them all. It was a delicious meal and co-operatively speaking, with regard to price, variety and sociability, it could never have been equalled individually.

I could go on and on, digging deep into forgotten corners of my mind, and tell you of dozens of other co-operative schemes that have been undertaken here, but I must stop. The girls are about to begin something new and I don't want to miss it. For the past few evenings we have been dyeing our old nylon stockings all the colors of the rainbow. We have purchased a roll of copper wire, a roll of green flower tape, and some flower centres. Today we are going to begin our latest project, "Beautiful Corsages from Old Nylons." April, 1953.

Staff Associations

A.T.A. Local

The Correspondence School Branch formed an A.T.A. Local, which received its charter in October of 1941. Monthly meetings were held in the evenings. Programmes included lectures and panel discussions of an educational nature. An effort was made to make all staff members thoroughly familiar with the principles of Progressive Education.

Civil Service Association

There was also a drive for membership in the Civil Service Association, led by Mr. Kenworthy.

Staff Conferences

In September of 1941, for the first time, a series of staff conferences was held. These were designed to make the new teachers acquainted with the unique nature of correspondence teaching, and to give the continuing teachers a chance to reassess the objectives of correspondence education. In one of these conferences Dr. Newland dealt with "A Progressive Philosophy of Education." All other conferences were led by members of the Correspondence School Branch.

Completion of the Reorganization

In 1942, the fourth and last year of the Department's programme of taking over all correspondence education, efforts focused on Grade Twelve. With this goal reached, the basic objectives of the reorganization had been achieved. In a certain sense the pattern of organization, familiar to hundreds of teachers who have worked at the Correspondence School Branch in the years since 1942, was then in place; and John W. Chalmers could well have said with some justice, "There! That's that!" as he left in July to join the R.C.A.F. In his absence George F. Bruce became acting director and was responsible for the final integration of the Elementary Section into the Correspondence School Branch over a cup of tea. There had continued to be a tendency on the part of the Elementary Section to hold aloof from the rest of the Correspondence School Branch, both in administrative matters and in social events. The tendency, of course, was reinforced by the fact that the members of the Section did not use the Administrative Section for receiving lessons, writing letters to students or returning and recording lessons. One teacher remembers that a tea was to be held in aid of some worthy cause. Mr. Bruce went to the Elementary Section and implored the members to "come downstairs for tea." A teacher objected that she didn't know any of "those teachers." This, of course, was true. Isolation on the third floor, added to the day-to-day work of correcting lessons, did not allow much in the way of socializing. Mr. Bruce replied that the only way for staff members to know each other was to meet each other on some common occasion, and that she really must "come downstairs for tea." Mr. Bruce had not been a missionary in the Orient for nothing. The teacher went "downstairs for tea"!

PART III

Meeting the New Mandate

Following the reorganization, the Correspondence School Branch was in a position to meet the enormous challenges of the next decade. The man who was primarily responsible for leading the Branch through this difficult period was George F. Bruce.

George F. Bruce

Bruce was born in Tara, Ontario, and, after completing his high school education in Calgary, attended Calgary Normal School in 1915. He taught school in Alberta from 1916 to 1925, meanwhile taking correspondence courses and attending summer sessions at university. Between September 1925 and May 1927, he studied for the Bachelor of Arts degree at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

From 1927 to 1941 he was an educational missionary of the United Church of Canada. During this period he studied the Korean language and was principal of Eu Jin Academy, a boys' high school in Lung Ching Tsun, East Manchuria. While on furlough he returned to study for his Bachelor of Pedagogy degree at the Ontario College of Education in Toronto, Ontario. After two more years in the Orient he returned to Canada and settled in Edmonton. He took education courses at the University of Alberta, receiving his B. Ed. in 1942. Well acquainted with correspondence education and with education carried on in another language, Bruce was in a position to offer a perspective all his own to the field of correspondence education. He was in for a surprise, however, if he thought that with the taking over of Grade Twelve the Correspondence School Branch had no more organizational challenges left and could experiment with new forms of correspondence education. In 1942 the Correspondence School Branch was bursting at the seams again, and something had to be done. The Annual Report for that year was able to state that the Correspondence School Branch was again "comfortably settled," thanks to the efforts of a number of cabinet ministers and government agencies. The Correspondence School Branch had to take even more space in the "old Terrace Building."

There is little doubt that the tremendous expansion that took place at the Correspondence School Branch had the Premier's support and approval. William Aberhart, the Premier and Minister of Education, had been a teacher. He was intimately acquainted with the weaknesses of the teacher's position in society, weaknesses which let the teaching profession remain an underpaid "stepping stone" while everyone gave lip service to the importance of a good education.

George F. Bruce
Director
Correspondence School Branch
1946 - 1962

His leadership brought before the Alberta Legislature measures which began to improve education in general and the economic status of teachers in particular. Among the more important of these were amendments to the School Act which permitted continuous contracts, permitted severance of contract only upon mutual agreement, and established the teacher's right to a board of reference against dismissal at any time of the year. Individual contracts were abolished, and all teachers came under collective bargaining. The importance of these measures was not seen by all at the time, but teachers had come to feel that in Aberhart they had a friend.

"The Correspondent"

In the fall of 1942 the Correspondence School Branch began the publication of a school newspaper with Vada McMahan as editor. Students were invited to suggest names for it, and "The Correspondent" was the name chosen. It was so popular that a newspaper was begun for the Intermediate grades, and eventually, in 1945, the Elementary grades took part. This was the year when a special issue of "The Correspondent" was published in magazine form. This special 1945 issue was seen through the press by William Cutt (editor), Alice Stephenson, Margaret Fowkes and Isabel Dean. It featured articles and photographs submitted by students, photographs of Correspondence School Branch staff members at work, a French page, and short biographies of a number of teachers.

Correspondence Centres

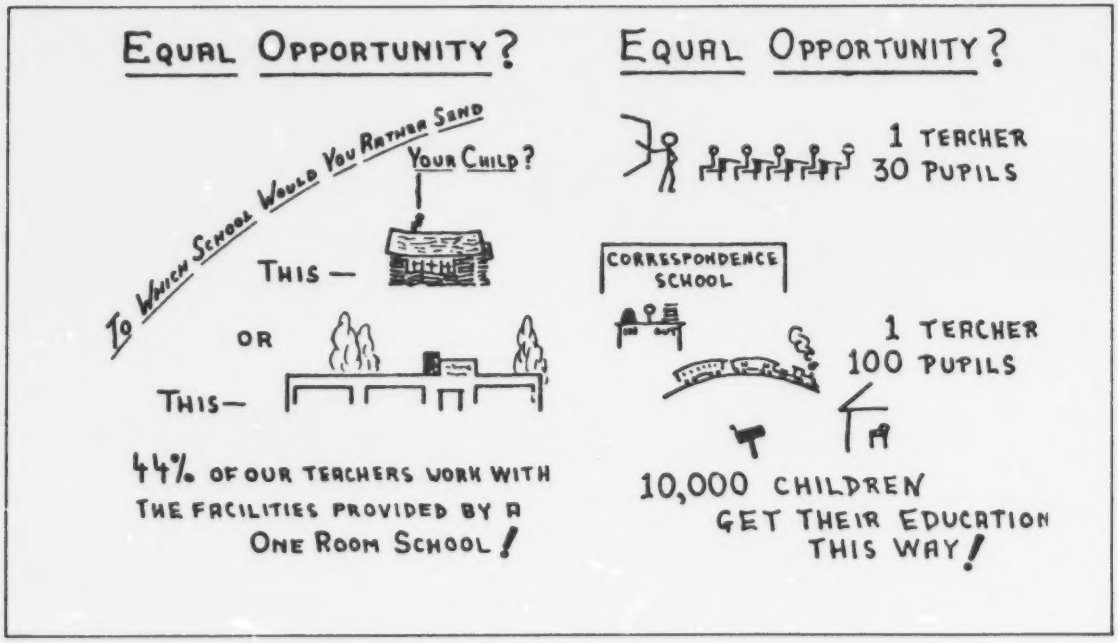
In 1943 a sudden upsurge in registrations for correspondence courses took place. This rapid expansion continued for some time. Nancy Thompson has written about this period in the history of the Correspondence School Branch:

> On leave of absence I attended the University of Alberta, September, 1943, to April 1944, completing my Bachelor of Arts degree. On my return to the Correspondence School, conditions had changed. The Department of Education was now facing a shortage of classroom teachers. A plan was devised so that pupils in the one-room rural schools without a teacher could come together to work on their correspondence lessons, rather than having to struggle along at home. The Department provided them with supervisors - responsible young people and adults, for the most part without academic qualifications beyond high

school. The Alberta Teachers' Association were not at all happy with the situation, and were often quite unfriendly to supervisors in supervised centres. An alternative way of handling the teacher shortage (before the time of bussing) was never clearly defined by the A.T.A.

The tremendous increase in correspondence education, especially in the lower grades, meant a terrific growth of the number of teachers required for the preparation of lessons and for the marking of the same, and an opportunity for former teachers (chiefly married women) to find employment in the city. In the Terrace Building there was little room for more space or more office equipment, and conditions became very, very crowded.

There was a continuing increase in enrollment as new correspondence centres were opened in country schools which had been closed. These correspondence centres were to be a feature of Alberta education until the 1960's. The greatest impact continued to be on the Elementary Section. There was a four-fold increase in staff members, meaning that the old original Branch was expanded almost beyond recognition.



From a brief entitled "Alberta as Educator."

By 1946 there were 673 correspondence centres. These centres and the people supervising them were coming to the attention of the public across Alberta. A brief, prepared jointly by the A.T.A. and the A.S.T.A. in January 1946, contained a cartoon satirizing the Correspondence School Branch: "One Teacher - One Hundred Pupils," ran the caption "Ten thousand children get their education this way!" The cartoon was excellent publicity, bringing the Correspondence School Branch to the attention of many people who had never heard of it.

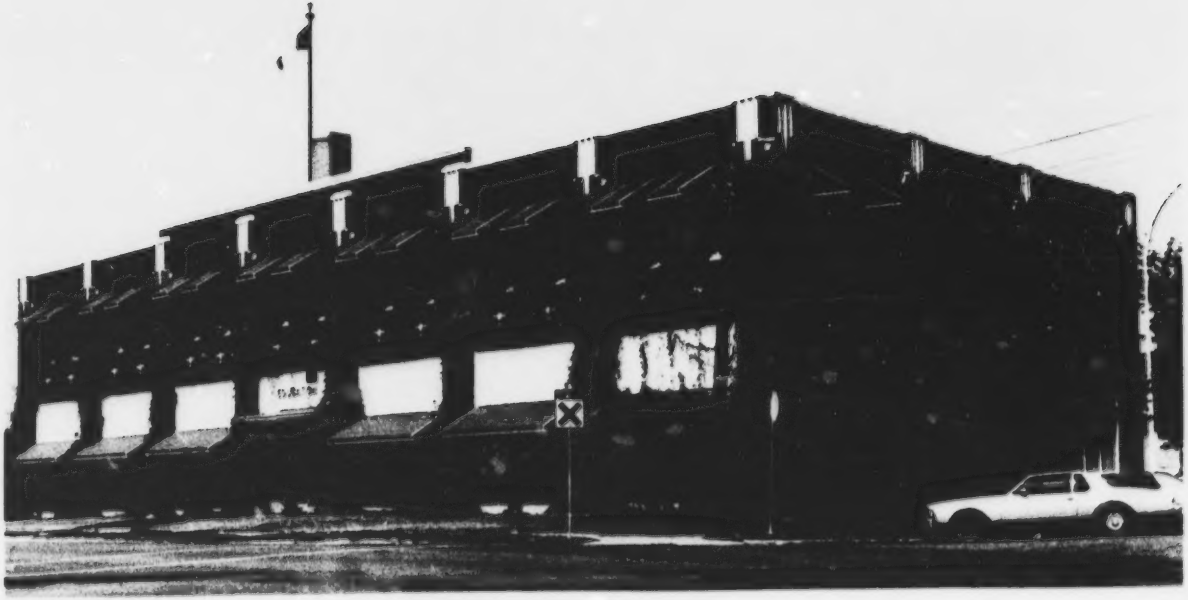
The War in Europe Ends

By 1944 the war was in its fifth year. The heavy casualties of the Dieppe raid were almost ancient history, and many Alberta homes had reason to remember the name of an obscure Italian village where a loved one was buried. On the home front, managing ration coupons was as much a part of keeping house as managing money. Getting a tire for the old car involved problems of applying for a permit to buy a tire and finding a dealer with one in stock. Nancy Thompson has written of the surprise that faced most Canadians in early June:

> I recall that on D-Day, June 6, 1944, when the Combined Forces began their "invasion" of Europe, we civil servants were given time off to go downtown and enter any of the churches that, in response to the anticipated event, were prepared to offer a service of prayer.

With the end of the war in Europe J.W. Chalmers returned to the Correspondence School Branch in November 1944. He relates one of his experiences upon his return to the Branch.

> ...it was the Branch's custom to take a fifteen-minute tea or coffee break in the middle of the afternoon, another occasion for social intercourse. At this time any general announcements would be promulgated. I remember one in particular I made after coming back from the R.C.A.F. I had heard that Chief Inspector W.E. Frame, a two-war veteran, had been asked how he should be addressed on his return to the Department, whether as Mr. or Major Frame. The story, although perhaps apocryphal, continues that Frame replied, rather obliquely, that he had become used to being addressed as Major Frame.
>
> I announced to the staff that since service titles were still in order for veterans, thereafter I expected to be addressed as Flying Officer Chalmers. "Is that understood?" Whereupon with one accord the staff replied, "Yes, Mr. Chalmers!"



Alberta Correspondence School
12116 Stony Plain Road

Relocation

When Mr. Chalmers returned to the Branch, he found the building so crowded that everyone knew that a change of some kind would have to be made.

The long-hoped-for move from the cramped quarters in the "old Terrace Building" took place in March 1945. The building chosen to be the new home of the Correspondence School Branch was the Public Works building on 121 Street and Stony Plain Road. This building, which had once been an implement agency, did not offer significantly more space; but it did allow for more independence in the use of that space. The move met with a mixed reaction on the part of the teachers. Teachers had enjoyed the lawns and flower beds of the Legislature Building grounds in summer; in winter the magazine section of the Legislature Library Reading Room had been a pleasant place to spend half an hour. The Public Works Building, on the other hand, had a railway spur-line leading to it, and the area, although chiefly residential, had industrial establishments nearby. The advantages, however, soon became clear. If anybody announced that the move marked the "end of an era," it was not recorded. Too many people had too many lessons to correct!

The move to the Public Works Building allowed for the final move in the integration of the old original Branch. The receiving, filing, typing and recording, done by the Elementary teachers since the beginning of the Branch under Mrs. Sievwright, became the responsibility of the support staff.

Chalmers Moves On

In August of 1945 J.W. Chalmers again took leave of absence, this time to do doctoral studies at Stanford University, in Palo Alto, California. Chalmers was to return to the Correspondence School Branch, but not as director. He came back for the Christmas break of 1945, and stretched out his Christmas break to about three weeks. With the cooperation of the Correspondence School Branch professional staff he gathered data on about seventy teachers for his doctoral dissertation, in an effort to discover the characteristics of a good correspondence teacher. The best indicator of probable success in correspondence teaching was, it turned out, success in classroom teaching as indicated by school inspectors' reports.

Before Chalmers' doctoral work was finished at Stanford, he was appointed Superintendent of Killam School Division, and did not return to his position as Director. G.F. Bruce, who had been Acting Director, was appointed Director in 1946.

Meeting New Needs

By this time, in a very real sense, the Correspondence School Branch had come of age. G. Fred McNally, Deputy Minister since 1935, retired in early 1946, having seen the Correspondence School Branch grow and mature, set up housekeeping for itself, and take the criticism that comes from being in the public service.

The idea that there would one day be an end to the need for correspondence education was prevalent both within the Department of Education and in the field. After all, surely a time would come when all the unorganized areas of the Province would be served by schools, making an institution such as the Correspondence School Branch unnecessary. Even Chalmers and Bruce were concerned with this eventuality. Special problems which accentuated the need for correspondence courses, however, continued to arise. Just when a slight decline in the number of correspondence centres was noticed, for example, the news came of the blowing in of Imperial - Leduc No. 1 on February 13, 1947. At first thought it might seem that the sudden discovery of a new resource with the accompanying increase in revenues would mean the building of new schools and the end of the need for correspondence services. The discovery did require, and make possible, the building of new schools; but it did not make correspondence services redundant. Now the Province had a population that was mobile in a way not seen before. Also correspondence lessons now had to be sent to areas in the bush which were accessible only in winter.

The 1948 *Annual Report* of the Department of Education told of seven classes of people taking correspondence courses: those in supervised centres; those in localities too far from school; those in detention homes of one kind or another; those who were ill or handicapped; those still in school but needing additional courses; those adolescents who, while self-supporting, wished to continue their studies; adults. Many an annual report since 1948 has mentioned much the same classes of students.

Elementary Staff, 1949

Supervisor of Elementary Section, Miss R. Lomas, fifth in second row. From left to right, beginning at front row: M. Von Arx, E. Mathers, L. Swindlehurst, O. Chonko, M. Keroack, W. Wendt, R. Waterman, D. Field, K. Laycock, E. Ball, K. Boyce.

Second row: C. Vowel, I. Ferguson, M. Meiklejohn, C. Breckan, R. Lomas, M. Fawkes, M. Viens, A. Peterson, C. Redmond, M. Valentine.

Third row: K. Bell, R. Marshall, J. Gummeson, E. Farley, B. Slevinsky, P. MacNutt, A. Stinson, M. Demco, M. Wilms, V. Falla, D. Wedder, M. Bury, A. McLaughlin.

Fourth row: K. Bourcier, V. Syrotuck, M. Hardy, B. Hall, G. Sanderson, E. Murray, M. Smith, E. Frith, C. Cook, E. Broen, A. Schell, M. Harvey, M. Beere, G. Ward.

Top row: M. Dean, A. Stretch, M. Barnett, G. Wallace, M. Warde, E. Harkness, E. Frederickson, D. Henkel, M. McCartney, S. Johnston, C. Petaski, M. Farnalls.

Junior High Staff, 1949

Miss E.C. Hopkins, Junior High Supervisor (to the right of the centre line in the front row). Instructors, reading from left to right - Front row: M. Buxton, M. Higginson, M. Norris, M. Wiens, W. Evans, E. Hopkins, V. Nelson, I. Thompson, M. Dunnigan, C. Fraser, J. Hill.

Second row: B. Bendle, E. Hart, E. Brickman, N. Lyons, E. Tomlinson, K. Morimoto, R. Thomson, S. Bohonos, D. McBain, E. Wells.

Third row: C. Wilkes, T. Griffith, J. Mills, R. Dean, E. Filipkowski, C. Cook, A. Lang, M. Ohrn, G. Julian.

Fourth row: A. Baycroft, A. Bain, W. McKay, W. Selezinka, F. Reid, T. Gordon.

High School Staff 1951-52

Back row (left to right): K. Doeling, E. Weeks, E. McKitrick, M. Lavallee, W. McIntyre, F. Page, J. Yates, J. Willans, W. Nordon, M. Maxwell, K. Beamish, J. Wells.

Front row (left to right): D.Flewelling, M. Russell, B. Watson, N. Thompson, D. McBain, G.F. Bruce, Director; H. Flint, High School Section Supervisor; M. Weston, A. Stephenson, H. Berry, M. Fraser.

Expansion of Services

Correspondence teachers have sought for a variety of ways to bring more personal contact into their correspondence work. The *Annual Report* for 1947 mentioned that "arrangements were made to have two elementary teachers visit two or three rural schools near Edmonton. They were thereby enabled to see the pupils respond to sample exercises, and so could improve the set-up of lesson material accordingly." These visits to rural schools did not, however, show how students in isolated localities respond to correspondence lessons. The next step in this direction would have to wait for a few years, and the germ of the idea was to come from New Zealand.

The Visiting Teachers

Ruth Lomas, for a number of years head of the Elementary Section, spent six months of 1955 in New Zealand. She came back convinced that the idea of a visiting teacher had much to recommend it. Her enthusiasm led G.F. Bruce to give the idea a try, and in 1956 Evelyn Harkness was appointed visiting teacher.

The position of visiting teacher underwent considerable change in its first few years. The original correspondence about the position called it "Resident Teacher at Fairview," and it was envisaged that the teacher would reside in Fairview and make her headquarters at the Fairview School of Agriculture. She would give particular attention to correspondence pupils in the Fairview School Division, but would be expected to extend her activities into neighbouring divisions as time went on.

In theory this teacher was to plan for the holding of day-long gatherings of correspondence pupils. At these assemblies pupils would be directed in half-day school sessions and half-day sports activities. Time was to be devoted to developing a programme helpful to parents as well!

This teacher was to be in Edmonton at the Correspondence School Branch for part of the summer holiday period and for one or two months each winter when country visiting was not possible.

Whatever Ruth Lomas saw about the position that appealed to her in its New Zealand home, the position as influenced by Alberta's climate and Peace River country roads underwent a radical change. As Evelyn Harkness reported in her second year, the name "Resident Teacher at Fairview" was far out of date. "In the last two months I have become 'Teacher at Large in the Peace River area'. " During the months of May and June, 1957, she had driven 5500 miles, using as headquarters a dozen towns between Whitecourt and Pouce Coupe, Manning and High Prairie. She had interviewed seventy pupils in forty-three homes and checked on seventeen others who had not been heard from for some time. In addition, she had visited ten supervised centres in five school divisions. In the following article Miss Harkness writes about her experiences as the Travelling Teacher for the Correspondence School Branch.

Travelling Teacher - A.D. 1956 by Evelyn Harkness

At the 1956 sitting of the Alberta Legislature, a new position was opened to fill a need of the Correspondence School Branch. A travelling teacher was to be sent into the Peace River country to visit the children who are getting their education by mail. Now that the spring and fall tours are over, I am qualified to tell what the job entails.

I have school division maps on which I plot the land locations of all the children registered in our office. Unfortunately, these maps do not have the roads marked on them, but by juggling a road map and a school division map, I know in what direction to start out.

I travel until I think I am in the vicinity of the pupil's home. Then I ask further directions from a country storekeeper or postmaster, from men working in the fields or on the roads, or from a farm housekeeper until I finally arrive at the right house. I knock at the door and as I wait for the door to be opened, I never fail to feel a thrill of expectancy, never knowing what the opening door will reveal. Always, when the mother learns that I am a representative of her child's school, she is glad to see me.

At this stage I am in the active role of liaison officer, bringing help and goodwill to the mother and pupil from our Edmonton office, and absorbing details of the attitudes of the parents, condition of the home, working conditions and habits of the child which I report back to the teachers in the office.

If the child is shy, not much is accomplished in the first visit. Indeed, I had a family of three who refused to come into the house at all, but fled like deer when I approached them. Most of the children, however, are willing to do some work for me on the first visit giving me a chance to find out something of their abilities and progress. Then having accomplished as much as I think wise in a first visit, I leave, hoping to return before too long.

Closely woven through this bare outline are the many colored threads of impressions and experiences. Every time a door opens new threads are woven because the homes vary so greatly. I may see the busy, clean interior of a progressive home or the bare untidy, hopeless interior of an unprogressive home. The child may be alert with plenty to say, indoor and outdoor activities, and doing well, or the child may be indifferent and slow to learn. The type of home does not always classify the child. But, of course, there are the many average children making their way along just as children in school do. This I found to be true, that every family is different, every family is interesting, every family is a strong unit in itself.

There are many incidents of my first uniting with this job that I would like to store in my memory. I wouldn't like the mental image to fade of the three deer-like children I have already mentioned who stood alert in a small clearing as I approached them. With my first words, the oldest one, with head up, wheeled and ran towards the bush, the others wheeling and racing after her with their long fair hair streaming behind. I wouldn't want to forget a little boy named Francis near Tupper Creek who danced for me to the tune of his mother's whistling; three under-privileged children waiting for me one morning, decked out in clean, bright clothing given to them by a travelling missionary. I introduced a school to them for the first time. There was a little girl, Bertha, one of five taking lessons by correspondence, who lives fifty-two miles from Spirit River, whose reading of her grade four reader was a delight; a wonderful girl at Cherry Point who is confined to a chair because of polio; a little red-haired, freckle-faced boy who tries so hard but can't quite make his grades; a barefoot who loves to draw in his meagre home at Marina; a beautiful little girl in Grande Prairie with a bobbing pony tail who has read as far as "magnets" in her "Discovering Our World" for the sheer interest she has in the world about her; three children at the end of a five-mile tractor trail north-east of Hines Creek; the unpretentious home and family of the talented Marie Jakober. These are a few of the children I would like to remember.

> At the office through the winter as I come across the names of children I have visited, I try to pass on to their teachers some of the understanding and "special feeling" I have acquired so that the links between our office and the pupil will be securely fastened at both ends. Who knows? It may be in the future that some name such as Hindmarch, Brong, Yurchyshyn, Cotton, Kehler, Dyck, Cameron, Van Norel, Peace, Rochon or Doerkson may be a name to reckon with. I hope so.
>
> (This article was published in the *Civil Service Bulletin* for October, 1957)

Although this arrangement did not solve all problems, it was soon noticed that people in isolated areas appreciated the teacher's visits. Marguerite Meiklejohn, the second visiting teacher, wrote in 1958:

> I was made aware of the value of these visits when I learned how disappointed people were that Miss Harkness failed to visit them in the fall of 1957 and the spring of 1958. I had to explain that, as there is only one visiting teacher, it is not possible to visit all the district in one year. Miss Harkness had been visiting in the south last fall and this spring. Most of these people do not realize just how large is our enrollment nor how scattered are the pupils.

The relationship that develops between a correspondence teacher and the many pupils taught can be a wonderful thing, as a visiting teacher often finds out. The most common question asked of a visiting teacher is "What is my teacher like?" A photograph can be of great importance. And yet the visit of the visiting teacher to the pupil's home can be a disconcerting experience. Evelyn Harkness tells of the three deer-like little girls who, on seeing a stranger, fled the scene like fawns. Wilma Sutherland, the third visiting teacher, told a *Western Producer* writer in 1969 that the basic experience was always the same, yet always different. Students, men in jails, women on lonely farms, children in out-of-the-way logging camps in the bush or in isolated ranches near the international boundary — all are always glad to have someone come for a few minutes of help and cheerful conversation. Verna Balay, in 1982, noted that

> Students showed me the special pages they have kept from lessons completed long ago. Can you believe that 20 green, 30 light orange, or 33 yellow Lesson Record Forms are stapled together, and saved? It was incredible!

Verna's title may be Education Liaison Officer, but the experiences she reports are much the same as those of her predecessors.

Distinguished Students

Both Mrs. Sievwright and Miss Robinson had noticed that many correspondence students did well on Departmental Examinations. The 1947 *Annual Report* mentioned "a young lad in Grade IX, who ran into trouble and was sent to jail." He continued his studies by correspondence and succeeded in passing the examinations. Accounts of the winning of Governor-General's medals also often mentioned students who had studied by correspondence. Correspondence teachers were alert, too, for contests in which to enter the work of their students, and many prizes were won. The most famous of such students — and the list would likely run into hundreds — was probably Marie Jakober, of Fairview, whose poem "The Fairy Queen," entered in a contest sponsored by *Shankar's Weekly* of New Delhi, India, in 1954, won a gold medal. The contest was entered by students from fifty-six countries. In early 1955 she learned of her good fortune. She soon learned of a sequel, too. As the second day of the Alberta Legislature's 1955 sitting opened, Premier Manning stood to move a resolution asking the government to grant a $1000 scholarship to Miss Jakober. J. Harper Prowse, Leader of the Opposition, seconded the motion. Premier Manning explained to the House that Marie had won the prize under "difficult circumstances" and deserved Province-wide recognition. Marie had never been able to attend a regular school but had progressed to grade seven by taking correspondence courses under the supervision of her mother, Mrs. Simon Jakober. Mr. Manning's resolution stipulated that Marie could collect her $1000 any time within the next seven years and use it for high school or university or any other form of cultural development.

In 1961 Marie decided to apply for the grant. Then a Grade Twelve student at St. Francis Xavier Separate School in Jasper Place, she had difficulty in finding time for writing.

Marie gained a Bachelor of Arts in English with distinction from St. Patrick's College of Carlton University, Ottawa, in 1968. She worked as a bank clerk, switchboard operator, travelling saleswoman, teacher and school librarian, all the while working on novels whenever a moment for it could be found.

In 1976 her novel *The Mind Gods* was published by Macmillan. George Ryga, author and playwright, also did part of his studies by correspondence.

PART IV

The Winds of Change

The Boom Years

During the 1960's and the 1970's Alberta experienced rapid growth and development. For the Alberta Correspondence School this period was also one of expansion, especially in the senior high school section. Student enrollment in high school courses increased rapidly as new courses were developed, and the quality of the course materials improved significantly. The directors responsible for leading the Alberta Correspondence School through this expansionary period were Mrs. Harriet Flint and Dr. Berthold Figur.

Mrs. Harriet Flint

Mrs. Harriet (Jill) Flint was born in Hampton, New Brunswick, the daughter of Colonel and Mrs. Barnes. She obtained her education in New Brunswick, receiving her B.A. from Mount Allison University. Her teaching experience was in Saskatchewan and Alberta Both she and her husband taught for a period of time at Camrose High School. The Flints also lived at Robb, Alberta, where Mr. Flint was mine superintendent until his failing health forced them to move to Edmonton.

Mrs. Flint obtained her M.A. in English from the University of Alberta, and for a number of years she was Assistant Director of the Correspondence School Branch. When G.F. Bruce retired in 1962, Mrs. Flint became Director and held that position until 1964 when she retired to make her home in Barbados.

In 1972 Mrs. Flint died and, as she had wished, her ashes were scattered in the ocean off the island which was her final home.

Mrs. Harriet A. Flint
Director
Correspondence School Branch
1962 - 1964

Dr. Berthold Figur

Berthold Figur was born in Morden, Manitoba and came to Alberta at the age of eleven. On completion of high school, he studied to become a teacher and subsequently taught in the Spirit River School Division before returning to the University of Alberta to take his Master's degree in Education.

Mr. Figur joined the staff of the Correspondence School Branch in 1949. His first position was in the Junior High School where he taught social studies. In 1957, he became the high school Registrar.

In 1958, Mr. Figur began work on his doctorate and until 1968 he attended summer sessions at Stanford University. He obtained his Ph.D. degree in 1968. By that time he was Director of the Correspondence School Branch. He had become Assistant Director under Mrs. Flint in 1962 and succeeded her as Director in 1964.

During his directorship, Dr. Figur worked to improve the quality of education not only provi. cially but also nationally and internationally. The Correspondence School Branch expanded rapidly, and during the 1970's more than one hundred teachers were on permanent staff. There were corresponding increases in clerical staff also. Many new courses were developed; laboratory kits were prepared and used for the science courses; a language laboratory was established to make cassettes for the expanding language programme which came to include Spanish and Ukrainian as well as French and German; courses to improve adult education were prepared and presented; and diagnostic tests to help in the placement of adults at appropriate levels in English and mathematics became a very useful counselling tool.

Dr. Figur campaigned to have correspondence teachers reclassified as teachers rather than instructors and to have married women employed by the government granted permanent status. He created supervisory positions to relieve the Assistant Director's work load and improved the level of professionalism among teachers. He encouraged the establishment of and served as President of A.T.A. Local No. 64. He was, in addition, largely responsible for drafting the constitution of that Local. Dr. Figur also encouraged participation in Specialist Councils, and leave was granted to teachers to attend Specialist Council Conferences and to serve on the executive councils. During this period the teachers at the Correspondence School continued to be actively involved in the Annual Rural Safety Essay Contest.

On the national scene, Dr. Figur was instrumental in setting up the Departments of Education Correspondence School Association, hosting the entire delegation at his own expense at the official luncheon at the Chateau Lacombe. Internationally, he worked for the International Conference for Correspondence Education and attended conferences in Stockholm, Paris, Brighton (England), Warrenton (Virginia), New Delhi, and Vancouver.

Dr. Berthold Figur
Director
Alberta Correspondence School
1964 - 1980

Computerization Considered

Serious consideration was given to computerization in 1966 and 1967. A study was made of the available technology with a view to replacing the card system adopted in the late 30's and early 40's with one or other of the computer systems then available. When it was found to be more time-consuming to make the required data entries than to use the manual system, the decision was made not to automate at that time. Automation of the School's administrative systems was not to become a reality at the Alberta Correspondence School for another twenty years.

Meeting the Challenge Presented by Labour Disputes

Postal Strikes

Strikes in the postal service always cause serious disruption to correspondence school services. During the 1976 postal strike the use of the government courier service was extended to correspondence students. With the cooperation and ingenuity of interested parents and local groups, considerable success has been achieved in keeping lessons moving to and from the School during postal strikes.

Teachers' Strikes

Closure of schools because of teacher strikes also affected the Alberta Correspondence School from time to time. Since 1980, the Alberta Correspondence School has provided course materials to students affected by teachers' strikes.

Broadcast Media Supplement Printed Course Materials

Radio Programmes

The correspondence teachers had the opportunity to work in another medium in the 1970's when radio programmes were prepared and presented. Some broadcasts gave information on the nature of the Alberta Correspondence School and explained registration procedures; others dealt with tapes of special concern in the different subject areas.

The hour-long programmes were aired on CKUA, and the listening audience was invited to phone in with questions and comments. The teachers who were involved found the radio experience interesting, and there was some favourable response. It was felt, however, that, on the whole, listener feedback was insufficient and the programmes were discontinued in 1974.

Television Programmes

In the early 1970's, the Alberta Correspondence School began experimenting with the use of television to complement some courses. Television appeared to be an ideal medium to provide correspondence students with more visual content, especially in vocational education courses such as Automotives 10. A series of 19 half-hour programmes was produced and the accompanying print materials were modified to articulate with the programmes.

When the Automotives 10 programmes were broadcast in 1971, they had a large viewing audience. However, an anomaly soon became apparent. The combination of printed course materials and television programmes did not appeal to students. A study revealed that students who selected correspondence study did not wish to be tied to a fixed schedule over an extended period of time. They preferred to work at their own pace and at their convenience. Students were also not generally receptive to shorter Electronics 10 and Food Science 10 series even though the general viewing audience remained large.

As the students had clearly demonstrated their preference for the flexibility provided by print materials and their reluctance to be tied to a fixed broadcast schedule, the Alberta Correspondence School discontinued broadcasting television programmes in the mid-1970's. Since then the Alberta Correspondence School has been working in collaboration with ACCESS to produce video-tapes which will supplement the print materials while maintaining the flexibility required by students.

The New Educational Technologies

During the 1980-81 school year, the Alberta Correspondence School began its first experiment with computer-assisted learning. In 1980, Ministerial approval was given for the Alberta Correspondence School to participate in the experimental use of the Telidon system. Mechanics 12 was selected as the course to be adapted for use on Telidon. The Telidon version of Mechanics 12 was field-tested in six rural high schools during the 1981-82 school year.

The Planning and Research Branch of Alberta Education commissioned an evaluation of the Telidon project. The findings of this study were published in November, 1982. The major conclusions of this study were that the instruction utilizing Telidon was as effective as traditional correspondence instruction and conventional in-school instruction; that there was a significantly higher completion rate for the Telidon group than for the traditional correspondence group; that students were very supportive of the use of Telidon and computer-based learning.

This study recommended that the Alberta Correspondence School should continue the development of computer-based learning materials and the practical shop experience which was also incorporated into this project.

Research Studies

Characteristics of Alberta Correspondence School Students

In 1974, Mr. Eugene Balay, an Alberta Correspondence School teacher preparing his Master's thesis, conducted a survey to determine why students enrolled in correspondence courses. An attempt was made to examine three aspects of enrollment and performance:

1. why students enrol in particular high school courses,
2. why they choose to study by correspondence in preference to classroom study, and
3. why some students discontinue their courses before completing them.

It was found that of all students who enrol, 50 percent had no other means of studying. Many students, the study revealed, took correspondence courses for self-improvement. A high percentage still took correspondence courses in order to obtain a high school diploma or admission to an institution of advanced education. Those who discontinued did so for a variety of reasons -- other opportunities being the main one.

The Cost/Benefit Study

An extensive study of the Alberta Correspondence School was conducted by Alberta Education in 1975. A number of factors prompted the decision to carry out an analysis of the cost/benefit of operating the School. These included the 1975 collective agreement with Alberta Correspondence School teachers, which raised salaries; the imposition of a budget guideline which limited increases in expenditure to 11 percent; and the negotiation of a two-month holiday to correspondence teachers.

The study was done in two parts. The first part examined the problems involved in the Summer Session programme. This examination took place between November, 1975 and February, 1976. The decision was made to continue the Summer Session programme and this was done until 1983 when the introduction of continuous registration eliminated the need for a separate summer school programme.

The second part examined the costs of meeting the objectives of the educational system by correspondence as compared with those of the conventional school system. The findings of this study were published in May, 1977. One of the conclusions reached was that on five counts the Alberta Correspondence School was preferred to the regular school:

1. During periods when high discount rates prevail, correspondence instruction yields the lowest net social costs.

2. Correspondence students are better prepared for subsequent residence study than regular school students.

3. The attitudes measured in the attitude survey indicate that correspondence study, and not classroom study, comes closest to the idealized concept of learning.

4. Correspondence study demands less time on the part of students than comparable regular instruction.

5. Because the costs of correspondence instruction may be further reduced through economies of scale and system analysis, correspondence instruction may be expected to become an even better option if adopted on a wider base.

Two recommendations of this study were that the Alberta Correspondence School should be maintained as an alternate form of education in Alberta and the Alberta Correspondence School should be afforded greater autonomy: specifically, policies pertaining to staffing and accounting which constrain efficient and flexible operation of the Alberta Correspondence School should be examined and revised as necessary.

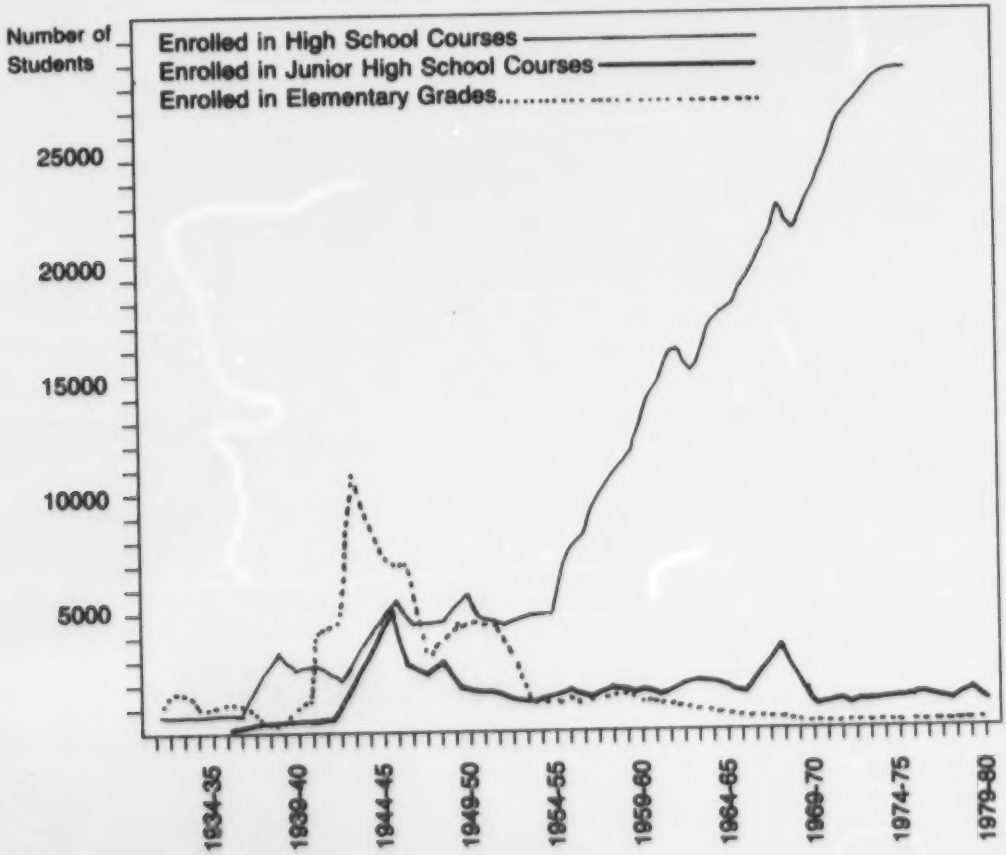
One cost reduction programme, which was recommended in the study and subsequently put into effect, was the utilization of contract teachers and a reduction in the number of teachers on permanent staff. Since 1979, contract teachers have assisted with lesson correction and course development. Over seventy contract teachers now provide teaching services for the ever increasing number of students studying by correspondence.

The Golden Jubilee

On the occasion of the Correspondence School's 50th anniversary in 1973, the School's name was changed to the Alberta Correspondence School by an Order-in-Council. Readers will remember that in 1931 Dr. McNally had inadvertently used that title in the Annual Report and four decades later, through the efforts of Dr. Figur, that was the name chosen for the rapidly expanding correspondence school.

Enrollment Patterns

Alberta Correspondence School Enrollment (1932 - 1983)



Interior view, 1973

In 1947 there were nearly 11,000 registrations in the elementary grades, and a little more than 3,000 in each of the junior and senior high departments. Then a sharp decline began in elementary registrations, which was nearly paralleled in junior high registrations. At the same time high school registrations began a slow rise, declining in 1952 and then rising again. Since 1954 high school registrations have continued to rise gradually while elementary and junior high registrations seem to fluctuate around a basic minimum. In the spring of 1983 over 26,000 students were registered at the Alberta Correspondence School, the overwhelming majority being in high school subjects.

In the early 1970's another change took place in registration procedures. Students were permitted to come to the office, enroll and pick up their courses at once. This was a great advantage to students and, as the years passed, the service increased until over thirty-five percent of registrations were made in person.

Staff Activities

Teech Speek

Through the years, various staff newspapers had been produced but none was of as long duration or steady output as Teech Speek. Teech Speek began publication in 1970 under sponsorship of A.T.A. Local 64. The editor and reporters were chosen each year and the paper strove to present a variety of opinions, news items, student "boners" and short articles selected from professional journals. This newspaper provided a history of changes in the School during the 1970's and several controversial issues were discussed, the most crucial being the School's relocation in the early 1980's.

Skit Night

For a number of years a Skit Night was held at Barnett House Auditorium each spring. On this occasion various sections of the School presented skits, competing for a cup. There were many entertaining and satirical presentations which, along with a musical programme by staff members, made for an enjoyable evening. One different offering was a movie created by the Science-Social Studies departments called "Salivation of the Bell." This movie satirized the rigidity of the tea break at that time. Lew Davies, the Science supervisor, was director, producer and cameraman, and, that year, the movie won the award.

Eventually interest in the Skit Night waned and the evening was discontinued; however, the Cup with the names of the winners inscribed on it still is on display at the Alberta Correspondence School.

The Coffee Shop

A long awaited change came in 1973 when more space was allocated in the building to the Alberta Correspondence School. Air conditioning — at times a mixed blessing — was installed and a coffee shop was opened by the C.N.I.B. The staff no longer clustered around their desks for a fixed coffee period but instead chose their own time for the break in the cafeteria. The bell which had for so many years indicated coffee time disappeared and a more relaxed atmosphere evolved.

Rural Safety Essay Contest

An important community service and a long-term commitment to safety education is the participation of the Alberta Correspondence School in the Annual Rural Safety Essay Contest sponsored by the Alberta Safety Council. Every spring, a panel of four teachers from the Alberta Correspondence School completes the final judging of this contest open to students in Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 in rural school jurisdictions. They choose two winning essays from every jurisdiction which competes for jurisdiction prizes, as well as four winning essays, one from each of the four grade levels, for the provincial prizes.

Jurisdiction winners of this essay contest each receive a lapel pin and plaque for the classroom. The four provincial winners are honoured at a luncheon in May hosted by the Rural Safety Committee. At this luncheon the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta presents each winner with a cash prize of one hundred dollars as well as a special lapel pin and a plaque for the classroom.

The first of the Rural Safety Essay programmes of the Alberta Safety Council was planned in 1951 by the directors of the Safety Council and officials of the Departments of Education and Agriculture. Since that time, the contest has had support from members of health and youth groups, farm organizations, machinery companies, and the media. The Department of Education was enthusiastic from the start because the proposed annual essay contest was seen as an incentive for English composition as well as a useful step in teaching safety to young people in rural areas.

With the exception of the first two contests, well over 40,000 rural students a year have been exposed to the Rural Safety Essay Contest. The Alberta Correspondence School is proud to be associated with a contest which encourages correct composition and teaches youngsters just a little bit more about safety than they knew before.

Changes in the Surroundings

During the Alberta Correspondence School's occupancy of Public Works Building No. 1 at 12116 Stony Plain Road, many changes took place in the locality. The railway spur line, which came from the north side of Molson's Brewery, has already been mentioned. It extended along the west side of the building as far as the loading dock. Several teachers still on staff remember seeing shipments of books being unloaded from a freight car on the spur line.

Along the west side of the spur line was a long, low, green-coloured building, or shed, used by the Government Surplus stores to house and sell surplus government equipment. In front of this shed, to the west and to the south, was a parking lot in which used government trucks, cars and other vehicles were stored and offered for sale. There was no parking lot for Correspondence School employees, but at that time it was not difficult to find street parking in the neighbourhood.

To the west of the School building and facing onto Stony Plain Road was a small house, for some time the residence of the former caretaker, Paul Martel, who lived there with his wife, Hilda.

As the years passed and Edmonton grew, the nature of the immediate vicinity changed. High-rise buildings replaced single-family houses and small apartment blocks. Traffic on Stony Plain Road became heavier and heavier. One of G.F. Bruce's last acts as Director in 1962 was to bring forward a proposal for the installation of traffic lights at 121 Street and 104 Avenue, a busy intersection four times a day and a hazard to motorists and pedestrians.

The Civil Service Bulletin recorded the fact that Mr. Bruce moved that the City Traffic Division be asked to install lights at that corner. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried with this recommendation:

> It is hoped that the city will see fit to comply before a tragedy occurs.

The city did not "see fit to comply," at least not for many years. A number of people were injured, some quite seriously, at the corner of 121 Street and 104 Avenue. In 1976, Miss M. Russell, a teacher from the Alberta Correspondence School, was so severely injured at the corner of 122 Street and 104 Avenue that she was not able to return to work. Traffic lights were installed at the 121st Street and 104th Avenue corner on June 24, 1982.

Establishment of C.S.B. Institutions and Affiliations

Sadie K. Robinson Memorial Library

The first major institution established at the Correspondence School Branch was the Sadie K. Robinson Memorial Library. Mention was made in Part I of this book that Sadie Robinson was the second employee of the Correspondence School and the successor to Mrs. Sievwright as Director. She subsequently became the head of the Elementary Section in the reorganized Correspondence School Branch. When Miss Robinson died in 1948, fellow teachers and friends sought for ways to perpetuate her memory. They settled on the idea of establishing the S.K. Robinson Memorial Library. Funds came from members of the Correspondence School Branch, other employees of the Department of Education, and several school divisions in parts of the Province where Miss Robinson had taught. This money made it possible to assemble a library of books suitable for elementary pupils.

A delightful tea was served by the teacher of the Elementary Section. The Administrative, Intermediate and High School Sections were guests. Special guests included Mrs. G.F. Bruce, Miss Marjorie Robinson and Miss Jean Robinson. The bookplate placed in books belonging to this library featured a photograph of Miss Robinson and the following inscription: "S.K. Robinson Memorial Library — In loving memory of Sadie K. Robinson who from 1921 to 1948 faithfully helped many children to obtain an education." Several books with this bookplate can still be found in the library.

Helen Edith MacMillan Memorial Prize

Two awards for Correspondence School Branch students also became part of the traditions of the Correspondence School Branch. The first of these was the Helen Edith MacMillan Memorial Prize, awarded to the correspondence student with the best marks in English 30. Helen was a graduate of Norwood Public and Victoria High Schools and achieved a brilliant record at the University of Alberta, where she took her B.A. in 1937, and her M.A. in English in 1939. She taught for a year at the high school in High Prairie and during the early war years held a position of responsibility with the British Admiralty in Ottawa. She was later scriptwriter and editor for the Alberta School Broadcasts and instructor in high school English at the Correspondence School Branch. She was an accomplished teacher and writer of English. She died in 1950. One of her favourite short pieces was "Punch Drunk."

Punch Drunk - by Helen E. MacMillan

In a few minutes now the thing will be done, this thing that has been eating into my brain like a maggot since the beginning of time — or so it seems. Was there ever a day when it did not torture my every waking thought? I cannot remember. But tonight there will be an end to it. They will say I am mad. Never was anyone so coldly, deadly sane as I am at this moment. Remember that when tomorrow's headlines scream the story of the vicious fiend that stalked tonight through the dark halls of the Public Works Building!

It is very quiet here now, so quiet that a mouse is nibbling at a cracker here at my elbow, making little crunching noises that sound like miniature landslides in the deathly stillness. The sun is sinking lower in the west. It must be time now. But no, I must not be impatient. There must be no danger of interruption. A few minutes more and the building will be in darkness, silent and empty — empty as the grave. Then it will be time. Then I shall steal down those stairs like an avenging shadow and destroy the monster that for more than two years has held me trapped in a net of fears.

What was that? I thought I heard a movement. Ah—it's just a paper rattling. This big barn-like room is always full of unexpected drafts. Nothing can go wrong now. I've laid my plans too carefully. No one knows that I am still in the building. I was clever about that. I left with the others and then pretended I had forgotten something. I knew no one would wait. It is on the record that the building is cleared in five minutes flat. No one saw me bring in the axe carefully concealed under my coat. I have it here beside me now. Its edge is razor keen.

Who's there?

I must get hold of myself. My nerves are as taut as a fiddle string. It's this waiting, endless waiting when every muscle in my body is geared for action. I feel exhilarated, almost as though I were intoxicated. Have I been drugged? Listen! The wind is rattling at the windows. The wind! I'm a fool. I forgot the wind is from the east tonight. No wonder I feel drunk. The heady fumes of beer mash are almost overpowering.

And now is the time. I have the axe clenched firmly in my hand. I must be careful. The door to the stairway creaks. Strange! I thought that when the moment came I'd be afraid, but see, my hand is steady as it grasps the door latch. The door is opening inch by inch without a sound. And now the darkness sucks me in as step by cautious step I stalk my unsuspecting victim. Where is the landing? Have I miscounted? Ah! — there it is. In my impatience I forgot these are the longest stairs in Edmonton.

My breath comes faster now. It tears and whistles through my throat. Can it be heard? No, nothing moves, and now in the dimness of the lower hall I see my victim there against the wall, like an evil vulture, pregnant with menace. Time is running short but I must stand a minute here and gloat. I have you at my mercy now. Tonight I shall repay a hundred-fold the agonizing hours and minutes you have caused me. And not only me but hundreds like me. A few courageous souls dared to defy your demands but they paid dearly for their actions. In your own time you brought even the most obstinate to heel. It was then I knew that there was no way but this to end your tyranny.

There is no need for caution now. That time is past. My breath is coming faster now. I feel the heat of righteous anger racing through my veins. I leap down the remaining stairs with the axe upraised. At last I am face to face with the cold, inhuman monster that has made my life a living hell. A fiendish laugh breaks through my clenched teeth and echoes crazily through the empty rooms. The keen blade of my axe bites clean. I strike and rise and strike again. It is not enough to wound or maim. This thing before me must be utterly destroyed.

And now at last the deed is done. My enemy lies hacked to pieces at my feet. My breath comes easier now. I feel a soothing lassitude caress my body. The axe slips gently from my fingers. They will find my fingerprints there in the morning. It doesn't matter. Nothing matters any more except that I am free again. It is not good that anyone be a slave, not even to a time clock.

(This short story appeared in the *Civil Service Bulletin*).

Very few details are known about the Memorial Prize. It was mentioned in the *Annual Report* of the Department of Education for 1955. It was won that year by an Edmonton girl with a mark of 100. The prize went in 1957 to a member of an Anglican sisterhood in the North who received a mark of 91. The prize was not awarded in 1958 or 1959 since no one received a mark over 90. In 1960 a Coleman man won it with a mark of 92. A Midnapore girl won it in 1961 with a mark of 100. It does not seem to have been awarded after this year. It has been suggested, by someone who knew them, that this prize was a special project of Mrs. Harriet Ada "Jill" Flint, a class friend of Helen MacMillan and Director from 1962 to 1964.

Mildred Rowe Weston Memorial Bursary

Another such institution is the Mildred Rowe Weston Memorial Bursary. Mildred was born in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, and moved to Edmonton at an early age. Her ambition was to become a doctor. After completing her B.A. at the University of Alberta, however, she decided to become a teacher, and attended Camrose Normal School. Her unusual talent for business helped her to decide upon the field of commercial work and subsequently she took her Bachelor of Education degree in Business Education. She began work at the Correspondence School Branch in 1942.

Mrs. Weston strove constantly to keep abreast of current trends in the business community. She regularly attended seminars in Canada and the United States. She became a member of the International Council on Correspondence Education. She found time for community work and was a devoted cubmaster for many years.

She made provision in her will for a fund to provide bursaries to students attending university who had taken part of their education by correspondence. The first committee set up to administer this bursary met in 1969, and consisted of Mr. Bredo, Dr. Figur, Mrs. Doeling, Mr. Merkley, and Miss B.A. Watson, secretary. The fund has prospered, and each year the committee is able to award a number of bursaries, rising interest rates having contributed materially to the fund's growth.

There is a stained-glass window in the east side of the sanctuary of Robertson Wesley United Church, at 102 Avenue and 123 Street. Placed there by the "Women of Robertson" in memory of Mildred Rowe Weston, it depicts the scene from John 12:3 where Mary anointed the feet of Jesus.

Stained-glass window in the east side of the sanctuary of Robertson Wesley United Church depicting the scene from John 12:3. The window was placed by the "Women of Robertson" in memory of Mildred Rowe Weston.

Let the Correspondence School Branch Do It

Over the years the Correspondence School Branch performed a number of duties which did not seem to belong naturally to anyone in particular, but had to nevertheless be done. An example is the Rural Safety Essay Contest sponsored by the Alberta Safety Council. Children throughout the province are encouraged to write essays on one aspect or another of safety at work, at school and in the home. If winners are to be announced, the essays must be read and evaluated. Since 1952 the School has provided the judges which make the decisions on the essays, Annie Vas having served as chief judge for many years.

International Conferences on Correspondence Education

Correspondence teachers the world over early felt the need to compare notes and share ideas with others. In 1938 the first International Conference on Correspondence Education was held at Victoria, B.C., under the leadership of Mr. J.W. Gibson. He saw to it that delegates concentrated on two aspects of correspondence education: bringing an enriched curriculum to small schools, and reaching boys and girls who for one reason or another could not attend organized schools of any sort. It is believed that six delegates represented Alberta at this conference. The Second World War disrupted any plans that may have been made at Victoria for a second conference, and a second was not held until 1948, when a group met in Lincoln, Nebraska. Succeeding conferences were held in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 1950, and at University Park, Pennsylvania, in 1953. At this conference G.F. Bruce presented a paper on "Administrative Practices." Bruce was also the Council's fifth president, serving in that capacity from 1953 to 1955.

The 1957 conference was held at Banff, Alberta, and Mr. Bruce acted as Chairman of the Committee on Arrangements and Entertainment. Eighteen delegates of the Correspondence School Branch attended, including Miss Ethel Hopkins, who at that time had been in correspondence work for over twenty-one years. Eight of the Canadian provinces, seventeen of the American states and Washington, D.C., Sweden, Ethiopia and Japan, were represented.

Ruth Lomas spoke on a problem of interest to all correspondence teachers: "Developing Friendly Relationships with Parents and Pupils." She began with the first contact, the application for lessons. She described letters that were then sent out on specially prepared notepaper. The next important step was taken when the first lesson was corrected:

> One superintendent said after examining these lessons that they are so vocalized you can almost hear the writer speak. Not only does this direct approach make the child feel the realness of his teacher but the simple vocabulary used makes it easier for the uneducated parent to follow the direction without giving the feeling of having been "talked down to."

It would be hard to find a finer compliment.

Since the Banff Conference in 1957 conferences have been held in the following places: Gearhart, Oregon, 1961; Stockholm, Sweden, 1965; Paris, France, 1969; Warrenton, Virginia, 1972; Brighton, England, 1975; New Delhi, India, 1978; and Vancouver, B.C., 1982.

Recent conferences have featured increasing attendance from African and Asian countries, and along with this has gone an emphasis on correspondence education at the technical school and university level. At the twelfth conference, held in Vancouver in 1982, it was decided to change the name of the organization to the International Council for Distance Education. The thirteenth conference is to be held in Melbourne, Australia in 1985.

After the seventh conference, held in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1965, Berthold Figur, then Director of the Correspondence School Branch, described the transition from rural to urban living which had been going on since 1931. He pointed out that in that same period enrollments of students of the elementary level had fallen 30 percent of the total in 1964, while those at the high school level had risen to 8500. Figur went on to describe another kind of change:

> Another kind of growth, concurrent with that of urbanization, has been that of school centralization. At one time Alberta had over five thousand small school districts, each four miles square and each having its own school. The number of administrative units has now been reduced to 240, including city systems such as Calgary and Edmonton. Within the

> administrative units outside of the city systems, schools are located at strategic centres,and children are conveyed by bus to these schools. The resulting school situations feature, in themselves, a kind of urbanization ... our entire Province ... has only 378 high schools and, during the last current school year, all but six of these schools have students enrolled in correspondence courses with our institution. This appears to be significant since such a demand by regular school systems for correspondence courses can only be caused by a strain on the facilities of the school system in question.

Figur then went on to outline the factors contributing to this strain on the facilities of school systems. These were (1) the inability of the school systems to offer a sufficiently wide programme, (2) a chronic lack of trained teachers, (3) movement of students within a school year, and (4) health problems or unacceptable behaviour at school.

Figur pointed out that these factors caused the Correspondence School problems of synchronization, of control, of staffing, of equipment and of accreditation. Synchronization required that the School be as flexible as possible in allowing enrollment. Where control was concerned, beginning with the 1961-62 school year, the guidance and supervision of correspondence courses taken by students in schools was delegated to the principals. In the matter of staffing, the Correspondence School Branch was trying to follow the "high standards" policy. Use of media to supplement the print materials was also planned. It was hoped to make greater use of recordings, science kits, coloured slides and television programmes. Figur believed that the success of the policy of accreditation of large schools in Alberta depended, in the last analysis, on success in following the "high standards" policy in hiring teachers.

Alberta Correspondence School representation at recent conferences has been very strong. An incomplete listing reveals that among teachers known to have attended two or more conferences are the following: Dr. Figur (6), Ruth Ada Heslep (6), Jean Hill (6), K.J. Doeling (4), Beth Watson (4), Dorothy McBain (3), Janet Wells (3), Mildred Weston (3), G.F. Bruce (2), Harriet Flint (2), Ruth Lomas (2), Maureen Maxwell (2), Marguerite Meiklejohn (2), Mildred Range (2), Alice Stephenson (2), Margrit von Arx (2).

The 1982 conference saw the following in attendance: Dale Albrecht; Eugene Balay; Verna Balay; Kathleen J. Doeling, Assistant Director; Dr. Figur (in retirement); Ruth Heslep; Jean Hill; Amelia Turnbull, Director; and Beth Watson, a former teacher.

Departments of Education Correspondence Schools Association (Canada)

Dr. Figur laid the foundation for this organization in the years before 1971 by travelling to various parts of Canada and meeting personally with the directors of the correspondence schools. As a result of contacts made in this way it was possible to hold an exploratory meeting in 1971. This meeting was held in Room 706 of the Administration Building, 10820 - 98 Avenue, and was attended by directors from all the western provinces, Ontario and Quebec. The decision was taken to form an organization, and a constitution was adopted. Dr. Figur was elected president, and plans were made to hold the next meeting in Montreal. Mrs. Mancini acted as recording secretary, and Georges Lavallee acted as interpreter.

The second meeting was held in Toronto the following year because of the inability of the director of the Quebec school, Mr. Farmer, to be present. Nova Scotia became the first Maritime province to attend.

Meetings have since been held annually and topics of interest in correspondence education discussed. Alberta has been represented on occasion by Dr. Figur, Mrs. Kay Doeling, Mrs. Amelia Turnbull and Mrs. B. Slevinsky. Mrs. Turnbull acted as secretary in 1976-77 and is president for the 1983-84 year. The assocation provides a vehicle for the exchange of information and enables directors to learn of alternative methods of solving problems in correspondence education.

Part V

On the Move Again

Decentralization

During the oil boom years in the 1970's there was rapid growth in Alberta, but this growth was not even. Although Edmonton and Calgary and some towns experienced rapid growth, the population in many farming centres declined. Planners began to be concerned about balanced growth and the Government, realizing the desirability of "decentralization," searched for ways to spread the Province's growth more evenly. When incentive programmes designed to help industries get established in small towns were not particularly successful, consideration was given to moving government offices out of Edmonton.

Relocation

The relocation of the Alberta Correspondence School was consistent with the Government's decentralization policy. On October 27, 1980, the Honourable David King, Minister of Education, convened a meeting at the Alberta Correspondence School and announced the relocation of the Alberta Correspondence School to Barrhead. The projected move, like that of 1945, did not meet with universal enthusiasm; but plans for the move went forward steadily. During the next three years arranging for the move was a major activity for all levels of administration at the Alberta Correspondence School. Alberta Education and Alberta Correspondence School officials were actively involved in assisting with the planning of the new facility, providing help and advice to staff members planning to move to Barrhead, and in finding alternate positions for staff members not wishing to make the move.

For individual staff members there were many decisions to be made. Staff who were opposed to the relocation formed an Action Committee in an attempt to organize public opinion against the move. Their efforts were not, however, particularly successful as the general public remained uninterested and there was no serious challenge to the Government's proposal.

Impact on Staffing

One negative effect on staffing was the loss of many able teachers and support staff who obtained employment elsewhere. Fortuntely, the loss of the academic staff was not so severe as the loss of support staff where there was a ninety percent turnover of staff. The attrition of the academic staff was also at a much slower rate, and this meant less disruption for the Instructional Services Division than for the Support Services Division of the Alberta Correspondence School. There were, nonetheless, some positive aspects to these staff problems because Alberta Education lifted the three-year freeze on hiring teachers and removed the salary bar which had prevented the School from paying for more than four years' experience for teachers joining the staff. These measures enabled the Alberta Correspondence School to recruit many valuable new staff members who provided the School with an infusion of new ideas and enthusiasm.

Planning the Move

Various committees such as the Personnel Committee and the Relocation Committee were struck to oversee the move. Membership on the committees included officials from Alberta Education, other government departments, Alberta Correspondence School administrators, and staff representatives. One of the most notable contributions of the committees was the production and circulation of periodic bulletins, eventually numbering eight in all, which covered all aspects of the move.

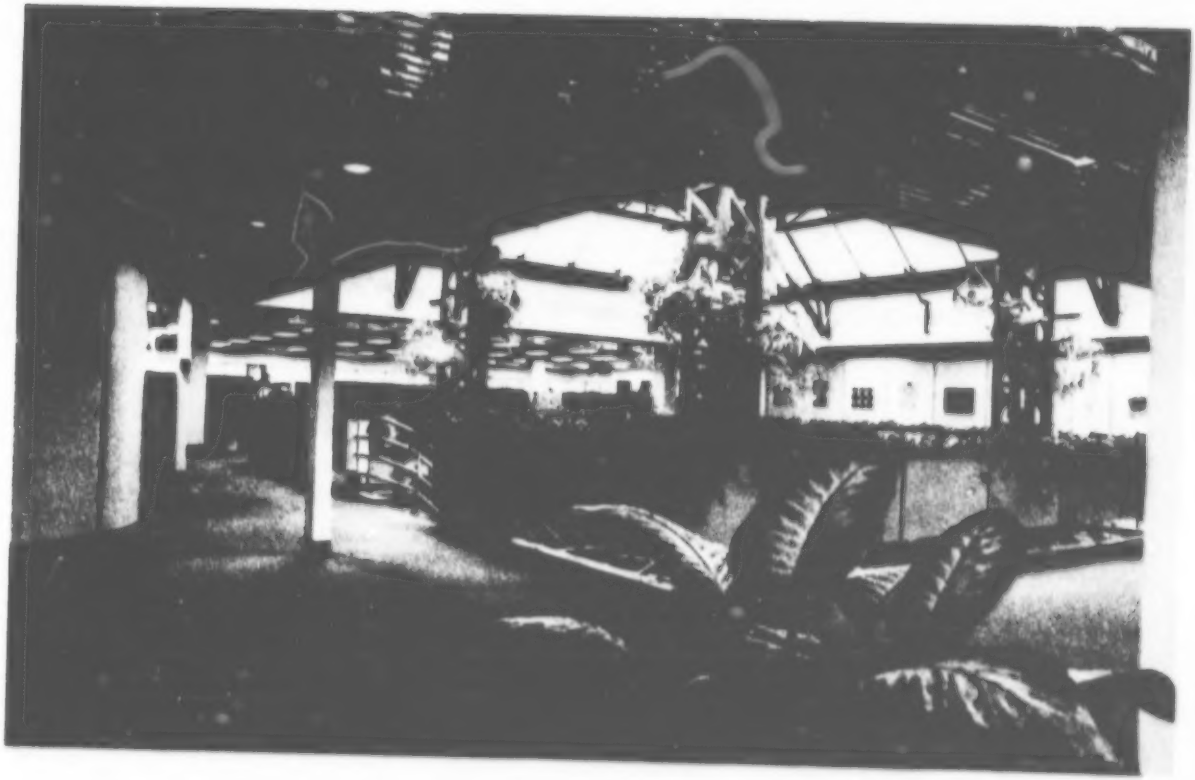
C.H.A.P.

Arrangements were made for several staff members who were interested in building homes in Barrhead to participate in the Co-operative Housing Action Programme. This is a government agency which teaches families to act as the general contractor in the construction of their homes. C.H.A.P. encourages families to use bulk buying, and it teaches ways to use "sweat" labour to reduce construction costs. This agency also supplied a construction advisor on the job site for the seven families who took advantage of this programme to build their homes in Barrhead. Although they did encounter some problems, they found the programme very beneficial and they did save a substantial amount of money.

The New Facility

After the facility design study was completed by Brawn, Parsons, Woods Planning Partnership, an architect, Les McKeown, was hired to develop the plans for the new building. Mr. McKeown's vision was of a glass and aluminum structure which was very modern, aesthetically pleasing and yet highly functional. His design for the School, which featured a central atrium, was completed in the spring of 1981; and the construction of the building commenced in October, 1981. The contract for the construction of the building was awarded to Kraft Construction. The erection of the building proceeded on schedule, and it was completed in the spring of 1983. This building houses the support staff and the cafeteria on the first floor, the academic staff on the second floor, the reference library on the third floor, and the print shop and storage areas in the basement.

Alberta Correspondence School, Barrhead



Interior view, 1984

Problems Encountered

Unfortunately, the building was not ready for occupancy in July, 1983 as had been planned because the furnishings for the new facility had not been installed. The move was, consequently, delayed until August; but when the new furniture still had not arrived, it had to be delayed again until September, 1983. Although the furniture was not available even as late as September, the move could be postponed no longer. By that time the vast majority of the clerical staff had found other positions, and the Alberta Correspondence School faced the problem of processing the huge volume of registrations which are received at the beginning of the school year.

The move, which was certainly not uneventful, was spread over a three-week period and would have taken much longer if the Alberta Correspondence School had not provided considerable assistance. The clerical staff, for example, did much of the packing and the teachers had to assemble their own desks before they could commence work in the new building. By mid-September, 1983, the Alberta Correspondence School was operating in its new location with a clerical staff that was almost entirely new employees, but with most of the old furniture and equipment brought up from Edmonton. As the new furniture gradually arrived and was installed during the remainder of the 1983-84 school year, the old furniture and equipment that had served the School for many decades was moved out.

The lack of experience of the new staff compounded the problem of moving at the beginning of the school year when thousands of student registrations must be processed. Approximately ninety percent of the School's clerical staff had transferred to other departments in Edmonton and did not relocate with the School to Barrhead. Although the new employees hired locally in Barrhead were capable and willing, they required training and time to learn the procedures and practices of the Alberta Correspondence School. As might be expected, productivity was low initially. Soon, however, the new staff came to understand the procedures; and the regular routines were once again working smoothly.

The problems of moving to a new location and recruiting new staff at the beginning of the school year were aggravated by the need for the Alberta Correspondence School to provide its services to students whose teachers were on strike. The provision of instructional materials to students in the St. Paul region and in the Lac St. Anne School Division quickly depleted the stocks of lesson materials. Unfortunately some students experienced delays in receiving their courses as they had to wait for some courses to be reprinted. Nonetheless, during November, 1983, the situation was turned around and normal services were restored by December, 1983.

Most of the academic and administrative staff moved with the School and set up residences in Barrhead. Some staff who had not intended to relocate did so eventually because they were unable to find other positions at a time when the economy was plunged into a recession. For those who were unable to relocate immediately, the Alberta Correspondence School provided several vans which ran daily between Edmonton and Barrhead in spite of the hazards posed by icy roads and wandering moose.

Establishment of the Edmonton Study Centre

One of these vans provided a courier service between the Alberta Correspondence School and its Study Centre in Edmonton. The Study Centre, which remained at the old site on Stony Plain Road, was opened to ensure that Edmonton area residents did not suffer any deterioration in the level of services provided by the Alberta Correspondence School. This centre provides registration, counselling, and examination services for students; and it is a distribution centre for lessons corrected by contract teachers in Edmonton.

Reorganization

During the 1960's and 1970's the Alberta Correspondence School grew in size and complexity; and by the early 1980's there was a need to restructure the organization so that it could respond more effectively to the challenges of contemporary society. The restructuring involved dividing the School into two separate divisions, Instructional Services and Support Services, with an Associate Director responsible for each division. The three existing academic units, the Elementary School, the Junior High School, and the Senior High School, formed the Instructional Services Division; and the manager supervising each school was designated as a principal. In the Senior High School, the principal was assisted by four vice-principals, each of whom was responsible for one of the four high school sections. Each section was, in turn, divided into two departments and a teacher-senior headed each department.

The Support Services Division consisted of the Administrative Services section and two new sections which were designed to provide better service to Alberta Correspondence School students. The Student Services Department was established to provide registration, counselling, and diagnostic services for students; and the Instructional Technology Department was formed to ensure the production of high quality learning materials which include print, audio, video and computer components.

This reorganization considerably expanded the managerial and supervisory staff at the Alberta Correspondence School and involved more staff members in the overall administration of the School. It also allowed for greater specialization within the units and the development of the expertise necessary for the continued growth of the Alberta Correspondence School during this technological age.

Official Opening

The relocation operation could be considered finally completed by the official opening of the new building on June 6, 1984. The Honourable David King, Minister of Education, and Ken Kowalski, M.L.A., Barrhead, performed the opening ceremonies and participated in the 60th anniversary celebrations which were held on the same day. In his Diamond Jubilee address, Mr. King recognized that, although the move of the Alberta Correspondence School to Barrhead was of benefit to the town, the new school was built for the students who use correspondence courses. He noted that, with over 30,000 students, the Alberta Correspondence School was the largest school in Alberta; and he expressed his belief that, through the use of satellite, microcomputer, Telidon, and teleconference, this enrollment would expand significantly.

Mr. King also presented long service plaques to several long term employees including Dr. Berthold Figur, who retired as Director on October 26, 1980 after thirty years with the Alberta Correspondence School, and Mrs. Kathleen Doeling, who retired as Associate Director, Instructional Services on October 26, 1983 after thirty-six years of service.

Minister of Education David King and Ken Kowalski, M.L.A. Barrhead at official opening

Mrs. Amelia J. Turnbull
Director
Alberta Correspondence School
1980 -

New Leadership

The Director during this challenging period in the history of the Alberta Correspondence School was Amelia Joy Turnbull who was appointed to the position in [illegible]mber, 1980. Mrs. Turnbull (nee Howell) was born in Mackay, Australia. She took her schooling and teac[illegible]ining in Queensland where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree and an Associate in Education diploma from the University of Queensland.

After teaching for a number of years in Australia, Mrs. Turnbull immigrated to Canada in 1966. Mrs. Turnbull taught for six years in rural Alberta before joining the staff of the Alberta Correspondence School in 1972. Her first Alberta Correspondence School teaching assignment was in the Electives section of the senior high school. In 1975, Mrs. Turnbull became Junior High School Principal, and in 1978 she returned to school to take her Master's Degree in Educational Administration at the University of Alberta.

During her first few years as Director, Mrs. Turnbull's primary tasks were to relocate, reorganize, restaff, and retool the operation. This was a time when the School probably witnessed more changes than ever before in its history. Yet all the while firm foundations that would support rapid future expansion were being laid. Rapid changes will continue to occur at the Alberta Correspondence School as many exciting approaches to education are introduced in the coming years. At long last, the full potential of the Alberta Correspondence School is being realized.

An Illustrious Correspondence Family

Since 1923 some 660,000 students have enrolled with the Alberta Correspondence School. Many of these students have gone on to achieve considerable distinction in later life. There has, however, probably been no other family as actively involved in correspondence education as the family of Ed and Grace Diesel. All of the Diesels' eleven children have taken most of their schooling by correspondence. This family believes that, in the twenty-six years they have been associated with the Alberta Correspondence School, the quality of the correspondence programme has improved immensely and that the teachers they have met over the years have been like family friends.

Mrs. Diesel relates some of her experiences with correspondence study in the following open letter.

Mrs. Diesel's Open Letter

Somewhere about twenty-six years ago, we were introduced to the Alberta Correspondence School in Edmonton. As my husband was a tree faller and a trapper, we needed a way to educate our children while we were with him on the trapline on which the sawmill was located. This was south of Grande Prairie on the Cutbank River, where there was no school district.

The supervisor at that time was Miss Lomas. Wilhelmena and Edward started in mid-term in Grade Two. This seemed to be a very interesting way to go to school.

In 1959-60 we applied for a homestead twenty miles north of Bonanza. This meant more correspondence schooling and another pupil to our home classroom, as Deaya was now of school age. We farmed from May to September/October at Bonanza and then we would go to our trapline from October to May, where Ed felled trees for the sawmill and trapped.

A rather comical thing happened one spring ... the Correspondence Branch wanted us to send in lessons each week and the Alberta Forestry Service had placed a ban on their road south of Grande Prairie. What could we do? How could we follow both directives?

Our next student for correspondence was Azalea. She, like the other children, did well at her self-explained lessons.

Our first visit by a travelling teacher was made by Miss Miklejohn. She somehow managed to drive her car on a rough winding road north of Bonanza to our homestead. It was harvest time and we had bundle teams and a separator, threshing wheat when she arrived. Everyone possible was helping. Lessons were forgotten for a while. Miss Miklejohn said that this was her favorite part of farming. She even pitched a few bundles in the threshing machine. Back to lessons again, The school children must have known their work for she gave only praise.

Soon Cloe started school, and we had five students studying by correspondence. The "new math" was a drastic change at the time, but proved later to be a help to algebra. There was an upgrading in the standard of work and information in most of the lessons. By the time that Penelope started school, she was taking in Grade One what the older children had taken in Grade Two.

Although we always had an acreage or farm, the children and I always went with Ed when he trapped and felled trees for the sawmill. This was why we continued on correspondence for the children. Morgan finally reached the age for schooling and two years later Dorrin started too. They both seemed to enjoy their lessons.

One very wet fall, we were back on the trapline and we made arrangements with Mrs. Sutherland, the travelling teacher at that time, to wait at Grovedale Store and Ed would pick her up and bring her out to the cabin. He brought her in, with our four-wheel drive vehicle with a lot of winching through mud holes and across beaver dams. She visited with the children awhile before Ed took her back out to her car at Grovedale. After this trip, it was understood that we would send in lessons when we could.

By now the older children were quite grown up and were able to look after the younger ones for a while. When Yolanda was a year old, I became a "class A" guide and helped Ed in his guiding big game hunters in season before he started winter work. As years went by, the standard of lessons was upgraded immensely, When Yolanda started correspondence we were at our Grovedale farm only twelve miles away from a public school. However, as there was no road for the school bus, we had a little over two years more of correspondence. Tammenithia took Grade One by mail. At last a road was upgraded, a school bus arrived, and the children went off to school. We all miss the colorful corrections, letters and cards from the teachers at the Alberta Correspondence School in Edmonton.

Dean took Grade One at the Grovedale School and then, due to an accident in October, 1975 where Ed lost his left hand, we sold the farm and tried trapping again in a different area. By now all we had at home with us were Dorrin, Yolanda, Tammy and Dean. Our trapline was located on the Red Rock Creek close to the Kakwa River and the mountains. The children did their lessons in a snug little cabin overlooking Red Rock Creek. This was in 1976. We guided some hunters that fall and after Christmas we went to visit Ed's cousins in Kansas and Oklahoma, U.S.A. The children did lessons in Kansas and Oklahoma. On the way down, we stopped at Deadwood, South Dakota where Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickok were legends. The students wrote about a lot of places, items that they saw, and stories that they heard for some of the lessons required for their various exercises.

Ed went to A.V.C. in Edmonton for his Grade Twelve while the children and I did some trapping. As the children were continuing on correspondence, we met Kathy Turnbull, the next travelling teacher. Later we purchased some land at Jarvie, and again we were without a road for the school bus. Kathy came again to our home the next year.

The following year we met the new travelling teacher, Mrs. Balay (who had a weakness for Dean's cartoons in his lessons). During the next school year Dean and Tammy went to school at Jarvie and took Grades Seven and Nine. Dorrin and Yolanda still did correspondence lessons at home. Yolanda finished her Grade Twelve by correspondence 1983-84.

All in all, we want to express our sincere thanks to all the teachers and travelling teachers that we have met over the past twenty-six years through the Alberta Correspondence School. Your way of schooling for the young people, wherever they may be, has to be world renowned. Thank you.

Mrs. Ed Diesel for all "The Ed Diesels"

Jarvie, Alberta
May 15, 1984

The First Sixty Years

The Alberta Correspondence School was founded on the principle of promoting equality of opportunity to Alberta students. The immediate need was to provide educational services to rural students who were not able to attend school. Since then the Alberta Correspondence School has continued to serve students with unique needs and to respond to the varying needs of students. The School has, over the years, developed and expanded to meet the educational demands of Albertans. Today, the Alberta Correspondence School is the largest branch in Alberta Education and the biggest school in Alberta.

Mrs. Sievwright would now have difficulty in recognizing the institution she founded sixty years ago, but her values are still reflected within the organization. Her dedication to serving the needs of students who had no other channel of education open to them is still firmly imprinted on the organization. If Mrs. Sievwright were still with us, she would feel justifiable pride in seeing the scope and the enormity of the work currently being performed by the Alberta Correspondence School. If the accomplishments of the next sixty years can match or surpass those of the first sixty years, the Alberta Correspondence School will achieve considerable distinction.